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RUPERT BROOKE



# AN ANTHOLOGY OF LONGER POEMS

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AND  
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*With a Frontispiece*

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## INTRODUCTION

IN this collection will be found represented some of the best narrative poems from the middle of the eighteenth century to the present day. It will be seen that they are of a romantic rather than of an epic cast of thought, though in some of the poems there is a romantic richness of expression with a classical restraint in the treatment of character and setting.

The poems move from the detailed, almost "photographic" descriptions of "Grongar Hill" to Goldsmith's tender regard for those who people the countryside, and so to Browning's intensely individualistic characterization. There are, indeed, many such streams of thought to be traced in this anthology.

There is, for instance, the poets' treatment of the English peasant folk. Rupert Brooke regards their quaint beliefs and self-sufficiency as a good joke, as it is, of course. In "Michael" we feel pity for the old shepherd as we see him trying to take up the pieces of his broken life in order, at fourscore, to mount the heights, do battle with the storms, and to move a step towards the realization of a vain dream.

Such a mood as this contrasts with the indolence of the Lotos-Eaters. They wish only for escape from the hardships of life, to live in forgetful ease. The "Prisoner of Chillon" combines something of these two moods; his life is wrecked, though he is a much

younger man than Michael, but he has endured slow tragedy : he has learned to love his prison so that he fears what the outer world may have in store for him.

It is important to notice the way in which some of these poems are narrated, for Byron is deeply introspective ; he identifies himself with Bonnivard. Wordsworth and Tennyson tell a story, or part of a story, sympathetically enough, but Byron speaks throughout with the voice of Bonnivard.

Brightness and cruelty, love and hatred mingle in "The Eve of St. Agnes" and in "The Gazelles." There is a beauty of scene and of movement, but there is an underlying thought that cruel men may murder Porphyro ; the swift grace of the gazelles, the beauty of the womenfolk and the graceful skill of the hunters contrast with the hard, short and useless lives of the animals.

In reading Coleridge and Morris we see a difference of mood and atmosphere ; with Coleridge shadowiness and a haunting fear of the unknown are powerfully attractive, but with Morris the actual story is as important as the manner of telling it. He begins at a crisis. At every step the story is progressing towards its end. As soon as Coleridge begins to tell of "a local habitation and a name" some of his charm disappears.

Some of these poems are tragic in the Chaucerian sense of plunging a man who has enjoyed great fame and happiness into the depths of misery by an undeserved turn of Fortune's wheel. This is so in "Sohrab and Rustum." Had the mood of mutual interest and sympathy prevailed a few moments longer, or had Rustum been a little more curious, or less inclined to condemn youthfulness, or had his wife been less careful of her son, the tragedy would have been averted.

Some consideration should be given to versification. With what different effects is rhyme royal used by Chatterton and by Morris? What use is made of the couplet in the hands of Dyer, Goldsmith, Coleridge, Byron, and Rupert Brooke? Is it true that Wordsworth's blank verse is little removed from downright prose? How does his blank verse differ in its effects from that of Keats? Why did Matthew Arnold write "Sohrab and Rustum" in blank verse and "The Scholar Gypsy" in the ten-line stanza? Questions like this should be asked and the answer sought in examining the poets' aims, moods, and achievements.

Comparative study can be carried too far and, certainly at first, each poem must speak its own message and be considered as a separate artistic achievement. As Sir Joshua Reynolds said, "The habit of contemplating and brooding over the ideas of great geniuses till you find yourself warmed by the contact, is the true method of an artist-like mind."

A.R.M.





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## GRONGAR HILL

SILENT Nymph ! with curious eye,  
Who the purple ev'ning lie  
On the mountain's lonely van,  
Beyond the noise of busy man,  
Painting fair the form of things,  
While the yellow linnet sings,  
Or the tuneful nightingale  
Charms the forest with her tale ;  
Come, with all thy various hues,  
Come, and aid thy sister Muse ; 10  
Now, while Phœbus, riding high,  
Gives lustre to the land and sky,  
Grongar Hill invites my song,  
Draw the landscape bright and strong ;  
Grongar ! in whose mossy cells,  
Sweetly musing, Quiet dwells ;  
Grongar ! in whose silent shade,  
For the modest Muses made,  
So oft I have, the ev'ning still,  
At the fountain of a rill 20  
Sat upon a flow'ry bed,  
With my hand beneath my head,  
While stray'd my eyes o'er Towy's flood,  
Over mead and over wood,  
From house to house, from hill to hill,  
Till Contemplation had her fill.

About his chequer'd sides I wind,  
And leave his brooks and meads behind,  
And groves and grottoes where I lay,  
And vistas shooting beams of day. 30  
Wide and wider spreads the vale,

As circles on a smooth canal :  
The mountains round, unhappy fate !  
Sooner or later, of all height,  
Withdraw their summits from the skies,  
And lessen as the others rise :  
Still the prospect wider spreads,  
Adds a thousand woods and meads ;  
Still it widens, widens still,  
And sinks the newly-risen hill.

40

Now I gain the mountain's brow,  
What a landscape lies below !  
No clouds, no vapours, intervene ;  
But the gay the open scene  
Does the face of Nature show  
In all the hues of heav'n's bow,  
And, swelling to embrace the light,  
Spreads around beneath the sight.

Old castles on the cliffs arise,  
Proudly tow'ring in the skies ;  
Rushing from the woods, the spires  
Seem from hence ascending fires ;  
Half his beams Apollo sheds  
On the yellow mountain heads,  
Gilds the fleeces of the flocks,  
And glitters on the broken rocks.

50

Below me trees unnumber'd rise,  
Beautiful in various dyes ;  
The gloomy pine, the poplar blue,  
The yellow beech, the sable yew,  
The slender fir, that taper grows,  
The sturdy oak with broad-spread boughs,  
And beyond the purple grove,  
Haunt of Phyllis, queen of love !  
Gaudy as the op'ning dawn,  
Lies a long and level lawn,  
On which a dark hill, steep and high,  
Holds and charms the wand'ring eye :  
Deep are his feet in Towy's flood,

60

# GRONGAR HILL

17

His sides are cloth'd with waving wood,  
And ancient towers crown his brow,  
That cast an awful look below ;  
Whose ragged walls the ivy creeps,  
And with her arms from falling keeps ;  
So both a safety from the wind  
On mutual dependence find.

70

'Tis now the raven's bleak abode ;  
'Tis now th' apartment of the toad ;  
And there the fox securely feeds,  
And there the pois'nous adder breeds,  
Conceal'd in ruins, moss, and weeds ;  
While, ever and anon, there falls  
Huge heaps of hoary moulder'd walls.  
Yet Time has seen, that lifts the low,  
And level lays the lofty brow,  
Has seen this broken pile complete,  
Big with the vanity of state :  
But transient is the smile of Fate !  
A little rule, a little sway,  
A sunbeam in a winter's day,  
Is all the proud and mighty have  
Between the cradle and the grave.

80

90

And see the rivers how they run  
Thro' woods and meads, in shade and sun !  
Sometimes swift, sometimes slow,  
Wave succeeding wave, they go  
A various journey to the deep,  
Like human life to endless sleep !  
Thus is Nature's vesture wrought,  
To instruct our wand'ring thought ;  
Thus she dresses green and gay,  
To disperse our cares away.

100

Ever charming, ever new,  
When will the landscape tire the view !  
The fountain's fall, the river's flow,  
The woody valleys warm and low ;  
The windy summit, wild and high,



Roughly rushing on the sky !  
The pleasant seat, the ruin'd tow'r,  
The naked rock, the shady bow'r ;  
The town and village, dome and farm,  
Each give each a double charm,  
As pearls upon an Ethiop's arm.

110

See on the mountain's southern side,  
Where the prospect opens wide,  
Where the ev'ning gilds the tide,  
How close and small the hedges lie !  
What streaks of meadow cross the eye !  
A step, methinks, may pass the stream,  
So little distant dangers seem ;  
So we mistake the future's face,  
Ey'd thro' Hope's deluding glass ;  
As yon summits soft and fair,  
Clad in colours of the air,  
Which, to those who journey near,  
Barren, brown, and rough appear ;  
Still we tread the same coarse way ;  
The present's still a cloudy day.

120

O may I with myself agree,  
And never covet what I see !  
Content me with an humble shade,  
My passions tam'd, my wishes laid ;  
For while our wishes wildly roll,  
We banish quiet from the soul :  
'Tis thus the busy beat the air,  
And misers gather wealth and care.

130

Now, ev'n now, my joys run high,  
As on the mountain-turf I lie ;  
While the wanton Zephyr sings,  
And in the vale perfumes his wings ;  
While the waters murmur deep ;  
While the shepherd charms his sheep ;  
While the birds unbounded fly,  
And with music fill the sky,  
Now, ev'n now, my joys run high.

140

Be full, ye Courts ! be great who will :  
 Search for Peace with all your skill ;  
 Open wide the lofty door,  
 Seek her on the marble floor :  
 In vain you search, she is not there ;  
 In vain ye search the domes of Care !  
 Grass and flow'rs Quiet treads,  
 On the meads and mountain-heads,  
 Along with Pleasure close ally'd,  
 Ever by each other's side,  
 And often, by the murm'ring rill,  
 Hears the thrush, while all is still,  
 Within the groves of Grongar Hill.

JOHN DYER

- 1-10 *Silent Nymph! . . . aid thy sister Muse* : The poem opens with an Invocation to the Nymph, or Muse of painting, to come to the aid of the Muse of poetry.
16. *Sweetly musing, Quiet dwells* : A fondness for personification is typical of the poets of the first part of the eighteenth century. Here there are some shadowy figures, Quiet, Pleasure, Peace, Care, and Hope.
- 57-62. *Below me trees unnumber'd rise* : Compare this "tree passage" with the ninth stanza of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book I, Canto 1. Spenser thinks of the legendary or the utilitarian aspects of his trees ; Dyer is content with a single epithet such as "gloomy" or "slender," "blue" or "yellow." This conventional placing of an epithet before nearly every noun is also typical of the eighteenth century.
- Cf. The pleasant seat, the ruin'd tow'r,  
 The naked rock, the shady bow'r. . . .
- 77-80. *'Tis now the raven's bleak abode* : The poet's eye takes in another "list" of things ; this time there is a group of animals.
- 88-91. *But transient is the smile of Fate* : It is a far cry from this somewhat vague moralizing to the poetry of Wordsworth. It is interesting to see this influence of Nature on the poet's mind.
- 99-102. *Thus is Nature's vesture . . . our cares away* : Here Nature ceases to be merely a background and becomes subservient to man but capable of giving him solace. The poet is detached from his subject. There is no clue whether he is really moved by what he sees.

## AN EXCELENTE BALADE OF CHARITIE

(AS WROTEN BIE THE GODE PRIEST, THOMAS ROWLEIE, 1464)

[In presenting this version of "An Excelente Balade of Charitie" I am aware that people do not always approve of modernized versions, yet it does not seem valuable to include many of Chatterton's easily penetrated disguises by writing *mie* for my, *peede* for pied, and *losst* for lost. Nor is it desirable to make the text unnecessarily difficult by retaining all Chatterton's spurious words. To do this would mean copious footnotes. I have therefore followed W. W. Skeat's version published by Messrs. George Bell and Sons in 1875, except that in a few places I have retained words which Chatterton found in Bailey's Dictionary or in Speght's edition of Chaucer.—A.R.M.]

In Virgyne now the sweltry sun gan sheen,  
 And hot upon the meads did cast his ray;  
 The apple reddened from its paly green,  
 And the soft pear did bend the leafy spray;  
 The pied chelandry sang the livelong day;  
 'Twas now the pride, the manhood of the year,  
 And eke the ground was decked in his most deft aumere.

The sun was gleaming in the midst of day,  
 Dead-still the air, and eke the welkin blue,  
 When from the sea arose in drear array 10  
 A heap of clouds of sable sullen hue,  
 The which full fast unto the woodland drew,  
 Hiding at once the sunnès festive face,  
 And the black tempest swelled and gathered up apace.

Beneath a holm, fast by a pathway-side,  
 Which did unto Saint Godwin's convent lead,  
 A hapless pilgrim moaning did abide,  
 Poor in his view, ungentle in his weed,  
 Long bretful of the miseries of need.  
 Where from the hailstorm could the almer fly? 20  
 He had no houses there, not any convent nigh.

Look in his gloomèd face, his sprite there scan ;  
 How woe-begone, how withered, dwindled, dead !  
 Haste to thy church-glebe-house, accursèd man !  
 Haste to thy kiste, thy only sleeping bed.  
 Cold as the clay which will grow on thy head  
 Are charity and love among high elves ;  
 For knights and barons live for pleasure and themselves.

The gathered storm is ripe ; the big drops fall,  
 The sun-burnt meadows smoke, and drink the rain ; 30  
 The coming ghastness doth the cattle pall,  
 And the full flockes are driving o'er the plain ;  
 Dashed from the clouds the waters fly again ;  
 The welkin opes, the yellow lightning flies,  
 And the hot fiery steam in the wide flashings dies.

List ! now the thunder's rattling noisy sound  
 Moves slowly on, and then full-swollen clangs,  
 Shakes the high spire, and lost, expended, drowned,  
 Still on the frightened ear of terror hangs ;  
 The winds are up ; the lofty elm-tree swangs ; 40  
 Again the lightning, and the thunder pours,  
 And the full clouds are burst at once in stony showers.

Spurring his palfrey o'er the watery plain,  
 The Abbot of Saint Godwin's convent came ;  
 His chapournette was drenchèd with the rain,  
 His painted girdle met with mickle shame ;  
 He aynewarde told his bederoll at the same ;  
 The storm increases, and he drew aside,  
 With the poor alms-craver near to the holm to bide.

His cope was all of Lincoln cloth so fine, 50  
 With a gold button fastened near his chin,  
 His autremete was edged with golden twine,  
 And his shoe's peak a noble's might have been ;  
 Full well it shewed he thought cost no sin.  
 The trammels of his palfrey pleased his sight,  
 For the horse-milliner his head with roses dight.

"An alms, sir priest!" the drooping pilgrim said,  
"Oh! let me wait within your convent-door,  
Till the sun shineth high above our head,  
And the loud tempest of the air is o'er. 60  
Helpless and old am I, alas! and poor.  
No house, no friend, nor money in my pouch,  
All that I call my own is this my silver crouche."

"Varlet!" replied the Abbot, "cease your din;  
This is no season alms and prayers to give,  
My porter never lets a beggar in;  
None touch my ring who not in honour live."  
And now the sun with the black clouds did strive,  
And shot upon the ground his glaring ray;  
The Abbot spurred his steed, and eftsoons rode away. 70

Once more the sky was black, the thunder rolled,  
Fast running o'er the plain a priest was seen;  
Not dight full proud, nor buttoned up in gold,  
His cope and jape were grey, and eke were clean;  
A limitour he was of order seen;  
And from the pathway-side then turnèd he,  
Where the poor beggar lay beneath the holmen tree.

"An alms, sir priest!" the drooping pilgrim said,  
"For sweet Saint Mary and your order's sake."  
The limitour then loosened his pouch-thread, 80  
And did thereout a groat of silver take:  
The needy pilgrim did for gladness shake,  
"Here, take this silver, it may ease thy care,  
We are God's stewards all, naught of our own we bear.

But ah! unhappy pilgrim, learn of me.  
Scarce any give a rentroll to their lord;  
Here, take my semicope, thou'rt bare, I see,  
'Tis thine; the saints will give me my reward."  
He left the pilgrim, and his way aborde.  
Virgin and holy Saints, who sit in gloure, 90  
Or give the mighty will, or give the good man power!

THOMAS CHATTERTON

## AN EXCELENTE BALADE OF CHARITIE 23

1. *Virgyne* : the Sign of Virgo in the Zodiac.
5. *chelandry*: goldfinch.
7. *aumere*: a loose robe. Chaucer uses the word with the meaning of "a purse."
16. *Saint Godwin's convent*: Chatterton makes Thomas Rowley, the Yorkist priest, gird at the uncharitable Lancastrian abbot of St. Godwin's. These were the days of the Wars of the Roses.
19. *bretful*: filled with. Another Chaucerian word.
20. *almer*: beggar.
24. *church-glebe-house*: the grave.
25. *kiste*: coffin.
31. *ghastness*: terror.
31. *pall*: appal.
35. *flashings*: Skeat has this in place of "lowings," which is connected with OE *lēoma*, a flame, a ray of light.
45. *chapournette*: a small round hat formerly worn by ecclesiastics.
47. *aynewarde*: backwards. This line means that he cursed at the rain.
50. *cope*: a cloak.
52. *autremete*: a loose, white robe.
56. *horse-milliner*. See p. 268.
63. *crouche*: crucifix.
74. *jape*: a short surplice.
75. *limitour*: a licensed begging friar. This is Chaucer's spelling of the word.
77. *holmen*: the holm oak tree. (See 11, 15 and 49.)
87. *semicope*: a short under-cloak.
89. *aborde*: went on.
90. *gloure*: glory.

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET AUBURN! loveliest village of the plain,  
 Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,  
 Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,  
 And parting summer's ling'ring blooms delay'd:  
 Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,  
 Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,  
 How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,  
 Where humble happiness endear'd each scene;  
 How often have I paus'd on every charm,  
 The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,  
 The never-failing brook, the busy mill,  
 The decent church that topp'd the neighbouring hill,  
 The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,

For talking age and whisp'ring lovers made;  
How often have I bless'd the coming day,  
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,  
And all the village train, from labour free,  
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree;  
While many a pastime circled in the shade,  
The young contending as the old survey'd; 20  
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,  
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round;  
And still as each repeated pleasure tir'd,  
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd;  
The dancing pair that simply sought renown,  
By holding out to tire each other down;  
The swain mistrustless of his smutt'd face,  
While secret laughter titter'd round the place;  
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,  
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove: 30  
These were thy charms, sweet village; sports like these,  
With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please;  
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,  
These were thy charms—But all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,  
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;  
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,  
And desolation saddens all thy green:  
One only master grasps the whole domain,  
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain: 40  
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,  
But chok'd with sedges, works its weedy way.  
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,  
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;  
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,  
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.  
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,  
And the long grass o'ertops the mould'ring wall;  
And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,  
Far, far away, thy children leave the land. 50

Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:  
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,  
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;  
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,  
Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more: 60  
His best companions, innocence and health;  
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are alter'd; trade's unfeeling train  
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;  
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,  
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose;  
And every want to opulence allied,  
And every pang that folly pays to pride.  
'Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,  
'Those calm desires that ask'd but little room, 70  
'Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,  
Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all the green;  
'These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,  
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet AUBURN! parent of the blissful hour,  
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.  
Here as I take my solitary rounds,  
Amidst thy tangling walks, and ruin'd grounds,  
And, many a year elaps'd, return to view  
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew, 80  
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,  
'Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wand'rings round this world of care,  
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—



I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,  
 Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;  
 To husband out life's taper at the close,  
 And keep the flame from wasting by repose.  
 I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,  
 Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill, 90  
 Around my fire an evening group to draw,  
 And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;  
 And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,  
 Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,  
 I still had hopes, my long vexations pass'd,  
 Here to return—and die at home at last.

! O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,  
 Retreats from care, that never must be mine,  
 How happy he who crowns in shades like these,  
 A youth of labour with an age of ease; 100  
 Who quits a world where strong temptations try  
 And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!  
 For him no wretches, born to work and weep,  
 Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;  
 No surly porter stands in guilty state  
 To spurn imploring famine from the gate;  
 But on he moves to meet his latter end,  
 Angels around befriending Virtue's friend;  
 Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,  
 While Resignation gently slopes the way; 110  
 And, all his prospects bright'ning to the last,  
 His Heaven commences ere the world be pass'd!

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close  
 Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;  
 There, as I pass'd with careless steps and slow,  
 The mingling notes came soften'd from below;  
 The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,  
 The sober herd that low'd to meet their young;  
 The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,  
 The playful children just let loose from school; 120

The watchdog's voice that bay'd the whisp'ring wind,  
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;  
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,  
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.  
But now the sounds of population fail,  
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,  
No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,  
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.  
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing  
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring; 130  
She, wretched matron, forc'd, in age, for bread,  
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,  
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,  
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;  
She only left of all the harmless train,  
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,  
And still where many a garden flower grows wild;  
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,  
The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140  
A man he was to all the country dear,  
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;  
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,  
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wished to change his place;  
Unpractis'd he to fawn, or seek for power,  
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;  
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,  
More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.  
His house was known to all the vagrant train, 150  
He chid their wand'rings, but reliev'd their pain;  
The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,  
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;  
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,  
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;  
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,  
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away;  
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,

Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.  
Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,  
And quite forgot their vices in their woe; 160  
Careless their merits, or their faults to scan,  
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,  
And e'en his failings lean'd to Virtue's side.  
But in his duty prompt at every call,  
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt, for all;  
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries  
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,  
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,  
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,  
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd,  
The reverend champion stood. At his control  
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;  
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,  
And his last falt'ring accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;  
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,  
And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray. 180  
The service pass'd, around the pious man,  
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;  
Even children follow'd with endearing wile,  
And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile.  
His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,  
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distress'd;  
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
But all his serious thoughts had rest in Heaven.  
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, 190  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,  
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,  
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,  
The village master taught his little school;  
A man severe he was, and stern to view;  
I knew him well, and every truant knew;  
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace  
The day's disasters in his morning face; 200  
Full well they laugh'd, with counterfeited glee,  
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;  
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,  
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd;  
Yet he was kind; or if severe in aught,  
The love he bore to learning was in fault;  
The village all declar'd how much he knew;  
'Twas certain he could write, and cypher too;  
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,  
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge. 210  
In arguing too, the parson own'd his skill,  
For e'en though vanquished, he could argue still;  
While words of learned length and thund'ring sound  
Amazed the gazing rustics rang'd around,  
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew,  
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot  
Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.  
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,  
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye, 220  
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd,  
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,  
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,  
And news much older than their ale went round.  
Imagination fondly stoops to trace  
The parlour splendours of that festive place;  
The white-wash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,  
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door;  
The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,

A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day; 230  
The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,  
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;  
The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,  
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;  
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,  
Rang'd o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

Vain, transitory splendours ! Could not all  
Reprive the tottering mansion from its fall !  
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart  
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart; 240  
Thither no more the peasant shall repair  
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;  
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,  
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;  
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,  
Relax his pond'rous strength, and lean to hear;  
The host himself no longer shall be found  
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;  
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be press'd,  
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,  
These simple blessings of the lowly train;  
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,  
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;  
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,  
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;  
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,  
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd:  
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,  
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd, 260  
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,  
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;  
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,  
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy.

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey  
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,  
'Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand  
Between a splendid and a happy land.  
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,  
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore; 270  
Hoards, e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,  
And rich men flock from all the world around.  
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name  
That leaves our useful products still the same.  
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride  
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;  
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,  
Space for his horses, ~~equipage~~ and hounds;  
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth  
Has robb'd the neighbouring fields of half their 280  
growth;

His seat, where solitary sports are seen,  
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;  
Around the world each needful product flies,  
For all the luxuries the world supplies:  
While thus the land adorn'd for pleasure, all  
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorn'd and plain,  
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,  
Slight's every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,  
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes: 290  
But when those charms are pass'd, for charms are frail,  
When time advances, and when lovers fail,  
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless;  
In all the glaring ~~impotence~~ <sup>weakness</sup> of dress.  
Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd,  
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd;  
But verging to decline, its splendours rise,  
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;  
While scourg'd by famine from the smiling land,  
The mournful peasant leads his humble band; 300

And while he sinks, without one arm to save,  
The country blooms—a garden, and a grave.

Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,  
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?  
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,  
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,  
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,  
And e'en the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped—What waits him there?  
To see profusion that he must not share; 310  
To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd  
To pamper luxury and thin mankind;  
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know  
Extorted from his fellow creature's woe.  
Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,  
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;  
Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,  
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.  
The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign  
Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train; 320  
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,  
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.  
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!  
Sure these denote one universal joy!  
Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes  
Where the poor houseless shiv'ring female lies.  
She once, perhaps, in village plenty bless'd,  
Has wept at tales of innocence distress'd;  
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,  
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn; 330  
Now lost to all, her friends, her virtue fled,  
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,  
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,  
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour.  
When idly first, ambitious of the town,  
' She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet AUBURN, thine, the loveliest train  
 Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?  
 E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,  
 At proud men's doors they ask a little bread! . 340

Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,  
 Where half the convex world intrudes between,  
 Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,  
 Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.  
 Far different there from all that charm'd before,  
 The various terrors of that horrid shore;  
 Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,  
 And fiercely shed intolerable day;  
 Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,  
 But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling; 350  
 Those pois'nous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,  
 Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;  
 Where at each step the stranger fears to wake  
 The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake:  
 Where crouching tigers wait their napless prey  
 And savage men more murd'rous still than they;  
 While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,  
 Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.  
 Far different these from every former scene,  
 The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green, 360  
 The breezy covert of the warbling grove,  
 That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,  
 That call'd them from their native walks away;  
 When the poor exiles, every pleasure pass'd,  
 Hung round their bowers, and fondly look'd their last,  
 And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain  
 For seats like these beyond the western main;  
 And shudd'ring still to face the distant deep,  
 Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep. 370  
 The good old sire the first prepar'd to go  
 To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;



But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,  
 He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.  
 His lovely daughter, love-lie in her tears,  
 The fond companion of his helpless years,  
 Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,  
 And left a lover's for a father's arms.

With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,  
 And bless'd the cot where every pleasure rose, 32c  
 And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,  
 And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear;  
 Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief  
 In all the silent manliness of grief.

O Luxury! thou curs'd by Heaven's decree,  
 How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee!  
 How do thy potions, with insidious joy  
 Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!  
 Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,  
 Boast of a florid vigour not their own; 39c  
 At every draught more large and large they grow,  
 A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;  
 Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,  
 Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

E'en now the devastation is begun,  
 And half the business of destruction done;  
 E'en now, methinks, as pond'ring here I stand,  
 I see the rural virtues leave the land:  
 Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,  
 That idly waiting flaps with ev'ry gale, 40c  
 Downward they move, a melancholy band,  
 Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.  
 Contented toil, and hospitable care,  
 And kind connubial tenderness, are there;  
 And piety, with wishes plac'd above,  
 And steady loyalty, and faithful love,  
 And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,  
 Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;

Unfit in these degenerate times of shame,  
 To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame ; 410  
 Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,  
 My shame in crowds, my solitary pride ;  
 Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,  
 That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so ;  
 Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,  
 Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well !  
 Farewell, and Oh ! where'er thy voice be tried,  
 On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,  
 Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,  
 Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420  
 Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,  
 Redress the rigours of th' inclement clime ;  
 Aid slighted truth ; with thy persuasive strain  
 Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain ;  
 Teach him, that states of native strength possess'd,  
 Though very poor, may still be very bless'd ;  
 That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,  
 As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away ;  
 While self-dependent power can time defy,  
 As rocks resist the billows and the sky. 430

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

6. *Seats of my youth* : The scene is set in England, but Goldsmith retains a few detailed recollections of the village of Lissoy in Westmeath which he had left nearly twenty years before.
12. *The decent church* : This use of the adjective is now archaic. It meant "comely" or "pleasant to behold."
27. *mistrustless of his smutted face* : unaware of the smuts on his face.
35. *loveliest of the lawn* : a level stretch of grass, and so an effective parallel with *plain* in line 1.
39. *One only master grasps the whole domain* : During the Agricultural Revolution in the latter half of the eighteenth century the big landowners enclosed the whole neighbourhood, including even the common land. Small farmers, men like Robert Burns, faced with ruin, were often compelled to emigrate.
56. *cumbrous pomp* : A reference to the huge, ostentatious country houses.

87. *To husband out life's taper at the close* : " Good husbandry " means " economical management of one's resources." There is an echo of " Macbeth ", for Banquo says

There's husbandry in heaven ;  
Their candles are all out.

Also, at the end of the play, Macbeth says

Out, out, brief candle !  
Life's but a walking shadow. . . .

106. *To spawn imploring famine from the gate* : Here the abstract *famine* is used in place of the concrete *starving peasantry*. It is a kind of personification.
122. *that spoke the vacant mind* : a mind free from boding thought.
124. *each purse the nightingale had nude* : The nightingale is not found in Ireland, so that Goldsmith is describing an English village with occasional reminiscences of his youth in Ireland.
132. *manling* : covered as with a green mantle.
- 137-192. In this character sketch of the village preacher Goldsmith had in mind his father and his elder brother. There is considerable feeling here. Especially of note is the righteous indignation in the lines.

Unpractis'd he to fawn, or seek for power,  
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour.

This sketch has a number of points in common with the lovable Dr. Primrose in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

162. His feelings prompted him to give long before he was conscious that he was acting charitably.
- 189-192. This noble, sustained simile justly beautifies the preacher's rising above the limitations of poverty and earthly cares and finding eternal renewal of strength and light from heaven.
- 193-216. Some of the traits in this portrait are drawn from Thomas Byrne, Goldsmith's master at Lissoy. Perhaps the attribution of superlative qualities in argument results from Goldsmith's friendship with Dr. Johnson, for the latter invariably played the pedagogue to his circle of friends.
194. *furze unprofitably gay* : This seems to strike a false, " economic " note. It recalls Keats's remark in the " Ode to a Nightingale " : " No hungry generations tread thee down." The nightingale is spared because it is not required for our food. The gorse is beautiful but unprofitable.
208. *cypher* : work out sums.
209. *terms* : probably the dates when the legal terms begin and end.

209. *tides* : when the various church festivals would fall in some future year. We still speak of Shrovetide and Eastertide.
210. *gauge* : calculate areas and volumes.
222. *grey-beard mirth* : Again Goldsmith uses the abstract for the concrete.
232. *twelve good rules* : maxims found in the study of Charles I and therefore, presumably, of his own compiling. In Goldsmith's day they were circulated freely on a broadsheet or large piece of paper printed on one side only. Two of the "good rules" were: *Pick no quarrels* and *Lay no wagers*.
232. *the royal game of goose* : a game played with dice and counters on a board divided into compartments on some of which a goose was drawn.
- 239-240. *Obscure it sinks . . . poor man's heart* : the homely inn, through lack of customers, crumbles to decay and with it goes the poor man's feeling of self-importance as he laid down the law to his fellows or "talked for victory."
248. *mantling* : to form a head of froth.
- 255-264. *Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play . . . if this be joy* : Compare this with the concluding lines of "Grongar Hill."
269. *Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore* : A reference to the development of our commercial prosperity following the work of the great British inventors in this era. Our wealth was increasing, but at the cost of the people's welfare.
280. *Has rob'd . . . goblin* : half the value of the harvest has been frittered away on this showy robe.
286. *barren splendour* : This sharply pointed contrast is called an *oxymoron*. This figure of speech is more vivid even than a paradox, for here the contrast is put into consecutive words.
- 287-294. *As some fair female . . . the glaring impotence of dress* : Here Goldsmith again makes effective use of a sustained simile.
288. *secure* : from *sine* and *cura*, "without a care." Her youth and beauty are sufficient ; there is no need to exercise care in charming those she meets.
295. *by luxury betray'd* : products we really need are sent abroad in exchange for all this profitless finery.
303. *where, shall poverty reside* : Again the abstract is used for the concrete, "poor people."
307. *Those fenceless fields* : the small farmer having been ousted, the whole countryside now belongs to one big landowner.
- 315-318. *Here, while the courtier . . . beside the way* : Notice the strong contrasts. The pale artist probably means the skilled workman, weak and underfed, but compelled to contribute his labour towards maintaining the splendour of others.

330. *Sweet . . . thorn* : The true spirit of poetry lay in the heart of Goldsmith.
336. *She left her wheel* : her spinning wheel could not compete with the more rapid and better output of the factories. Thus she was lured to town life.
344. *wild Altama* : the river Alatahama in Georgia, U.S.A.
346. *horrid* : the word originally meant "bristling" and so "unkempt" or "rough." Here it contrasts with the loveliness of the plains and lawns of Auburn.
- 354-362. Notice the choice of epithets in these lines, and especially *grassy-vested*.
372. *wept for other's woe* : Compare this with Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" :

To each his sufferings : all are men,  
 Condemn'd alike to groan ;  
 The tender for another's pain,  
 Th' unfeeling for his own.

384. *In all the silent manliness of grief* : Goldsmith lacks the polish of Pope's epigrams, but there is a downright force of moral persuasion which makes such lines as these live in the memory.
390. *florid* : excessively ornate. It is not a substantial vigour, but one that exists only by weakening what ought to be the true power and pride of the country.
407. *And thou, sweet Poetry* : Goldsmith evidently accepted the idea underlying Gray's "The Progress of Poesy," for he shows that liberty and well-being are essential if a state is to have poetic expression.
412. *My shame in crowds* : This seems to be exaggeration, especially as this very poem enjoyed a remarkable success even in the few years that were left him.
418. *Torno* : the river Tornea which flows through Lapland into the Gulf of Bothnia.
418. *Pambamarca* : a mountain near Quito in South America.
419. *equinoctial fervours* : the boiling heat of the tropics, where days and nights are of equal length.
- 421-426. These lines stir the feelings when it is recalled how soon afterwards Goldsmith died.
- 427-430. The concluding four lines were written by Dr. Johnson.

## A SONG TO DAVID

ARGUMENT. Invocation, i-iii. The excellence and lustre of David's character (in twelve points of view), proved from the history of his life, iv-xvi. He consecrates his genius for consolation and edification:—The subjects he made choice of—the Supreme Being—angels, men of renown, the works of nature in all directions, either particularly or collectively considered, xvii-xxvii. He obtains power over infernal spirits, and the malignity of his enemies; wins the heart of Michal, xxviii-xxix. Shows that the pillars of knowledge are the monuments of God's works in the first week. xxx-xxxvii.

An exercise upon the Decalogue, xi-xlix. The transcendent virtue of praise and adoration, l-ii. An exercise upon the seasons and the right use of them, lii-lxiii. An exercise upon the senses, and how to subdue them, lxiv-lxxi. An amplification in five degrees, which is wrought up to this conclusion:—That the best poet who ever lived, was thought worthy of the highest honour which possibly can be conceived, as the Saviour of the world was ascribed to his house, and called his son in the body, lxxii. The End.

## I

O THOU, that sitt'st upon a throne,  
With harp of high, majestic tone,  
To praise the King of kings:  
And voice of heaven-ascending swell,  
Which, while its deeper notes excel,  
Clear as a clarion rings;

## II

To bless each valley, grove, and coast,  
And charm the cherubs to the post  
Of gratitude in throngs;  
To keep the days on Zion's Mount,  
And send the Year to his account,  
With dances and with songs:

## III

O servant of God's holiest charge,  
 The minister of praise at large,  
     Which thou mayst now receive ;  
 From thy blest mansion hail and hear,  
 From topmost eminence appear  
     To this the wreath I weave.

## IV

Great, valiant, pious, good, and clean,  
 Sublime, contemplative, serene, 20  
     Strong, constant, pleasant, wise !  
 Bright effluence of exceeding grace ;  
 Best man ! the swiftness and the race,  
     The peril and the prize !

## V

Great—from the lustre of his crown,  
 From Samuel's horn, and God's renown,  
     Which is the people's voice ;  
 For all the host, from rear to van,  
 Applauded and embraced the man—  
     The man of God's own choice. 30

## VI

Valiant—the word, and up he rose :  
 The fight—he triumphed o'er the foes  
     Whom God's just laws abhor ;  
 And, armed in gallant faith, he took  
 Against the boaster, from the brook,  
     The weapons of the war.

## VII

Pious—magnificent and grand,  
 'Twas he the famous temple plann'd,  
     (The seraph in his soul :)  
 Foremost to give the Lord his dues, 40  
 Foremost to bless the welcome news,  
     And foremost to condole.

## A SONG TO DAVID

41

### VIII

Good—from Jehudah's genuine vein,  
From God's best nature, good in grain,  
His aspect and his heart :  
To pity, to forgive, to save,  
Witness En-gedi's conscious cave.  
And Shimei's blunted dart.

### IX

Clean—if perpetual prayer be pure,  
And love, which could itself inure  
To fasting and to fear—  
Clean in his gestures, hands and feet,  
To smite the lyre, the dance complete,  
To play the sword and spear.

50

### X

Sublime—invention ever young,  
Of vast conception, tow'ring tongue,  
To God the eternal theme ;  
Notes from yon exaltations caught,  
Unrival'd royalty of thought,  
O'er meaner strains supreme.

60

### XI

Contemplative—on God to fix  
His musings, and above the six  
The Sabbath-day he blessed ;  
'Twas then his thoughts self-conquest pruned,  
And heavenly melancholy tuned,  
To bless and bear the rest.

### XII

Serene—to sow the seeds of peace,  
Remembering, when he watched the fleece,  
How sweetly Kidron purled—  
To further knowledge, silence vice,  
And plant perpetual paradise,  
When God had calmed the world.

70



## XIII

Strong—in the Lord, who could defy  
 Satan, and all his powers that lie  
     In sempiternal night ;  
 And hell, and horror, and despair  
 Were as the lion and the bear  
     To his undaunted might.

## XIV

Constant—in love to God, THE TRUTH,  
 Age, manhood, infancy, and youth :  
     To Jonathan his friend  
 Constant, beyond the verge of death ;  
 And Ziba, and Mephibosheth,  
     His endless fame attend. 80

## XV

Pleasant—and various as the year ;  
 Man, soul, and angel without Peer,  
     Priest, champion, sage, and boy ;  
 In armour or in ephod clad,  
 His pomp, his piety was glad ;  
     Majestic was his joy. 90

## XVI

Wise—in recovery from his fall,  
 Whence rose his eminence o'er all,  
     Of all the most reviled ;  
 The light of Israel in his ways,  
 Wise are his precepts, prayer, and praise,  
     And counsel to his child.

## XVII

His muse, bright angel of his verse,  
 Gives balm for all the thorns that pierce,  
     For all the pangs that rage :  
 Blest light, still gaining on the gloom,  
 The more than Michal of his bloom,  
     The Abishag of his age. 100

## XVIII

He sang of God—the mighty source  
Of all things—the stupendous force  
On which all strength depends;  
From Whose right arm, beneath Whose eyes,  
All period, power, and enterprise  
Commences, reigns, and ends.

## XIX

Angels—their ministry and meed,  
Which to and fro with blessings speed, 110  
Or with their citterns wait;  
Where Michael, with his millions, bows,  
Where dwells the seraph and his spouse,  
The cherub and her mate.

## XX

Of man—the semblance and effect  
Of God and love—the saint elect  
For infinite applause—  
To rule the land, and briny broad,  
To be laborious in his laud,  
And heroes in his cause. 120

## XXI

The world—the clustering spheres He made,  
The glorious light, the soothing shade,  
Dale, champaign, grove, and hill;  
The multitudinous abyss,  
Where Secrecy remains in bliss,  
And Wisdom hides her skill.

## XXII

Trees, plants, and flowers—of virtuous root;  
Gem yielding blossom, yielding fruit,  
Choice gums and precious balm;  
Bless ye the nosegay in the vale, 130  
And with the sweetness of the gale  
Enrich the thankful psalm.

## XXIII

Of fowl—even every beak and wing  
Which cheer the winter, hail the spring,  
That live in peace or prey;  
They that make music, or that mock,  
The quail, the brave domestic cock,  
The raven, swan, and jay.

## XXIV

Of fishes—every size and shape,  
Which nature frames of light escape, 140  
Devouring man to shun:  
The shells are in the wealthy deep,  
The shoals upon the surface leap,  
And love the glancing sun.

## XXV

Of beasts—the beaver plods his task;  
While the sleek tigers roll and bask,  
Nor yet the shades arouse;  
Her cave the mining coney scoops;  
Where o'er the mead the mountain stoops,  
The kids exult and browse. 150

## XXVI

Of gems—their virtue and their price,  
Which, hid in earth from man's device,  
Their darts of lustre sheathe;  
The jasper of the master's stamp,  
The topaz blazing like a lamp,  
Among the mines beneath.

## XXVII

Blest was the tenderness he felt,  
When to his graceful harp he knelt,  
And did for audience call;  
When Satan with his hand he quelled, 160  
And in serene suspense he held  
The frantic throes of Saul.

## XXVIII

His furious foes no more maligned  
As he such melody divined,  
And sense and soul detained;  
Now striking strong, now soothing soft,  
He sent the godly sounds aloft,  
Or in delight refrained.

## XXIX

When up to heaven his thoughts he piled  
From fervent lips fair Michal smiled, 170  
As blush to blush she stood;  
And chose herself the queen, and gave  
Her utmost from her heart—"so brave,  
And plays his hymns so good."

## XXX

'The pillars of the Lord are seven,  
Which stand from earth to topmost heaven;  
His wisdom drew the plan;  
His Word accomplished the design,  
From brightest gem to deepest mine,  
From CHRIST enthroned to Man. 180

## XXXI

Alpha, the cause of causes, first  
In station, fountain, whence the burst  
Of light and blaze of day;  
Whence bold attempt, and brave advance,  
Have motion, life, and ordinance,  
And heaven itself its stay.

## XXXII

Gamma supports the glorious arch  
On which angelic legions march,  
And is with sapphires paved;  
'Thence the fleet clouds are sent adrift, 190  
And thence the painted folds that lift  
The crimson veil, are waved.

## XXXIII

Eta with living sculpture breathes,  
 With verdant carvings, flowery wreaths,  
 Of never-wasting bloom;  
 In strong relief his goodly base  
**All** instruments of labour grace,  
 The trowel, spade, and loom.

## XXXIV

Next Theta stands to the Supreme—  
 Who formed in number, sign, and scheme, 200  
 The illustrious lights that are;  
 And one addressed his saffron robe,  
 And one, clad in a silver globe,  
 Held rule with every star.

## XXXV

Iota's tuned to choral hymns  
 Of those that fly, while he that swims  
 In thankful safety lurks;  
 And foot, and chapter, and niche,  
 The various histories enrich  
 Of God's recorded works. 210

## XXXVI

Sigma presents the social droves  
 With him that solitary roves,  
 And man of all the chief;  
 Fair on whose face, and stately frame,  
 Did God impress His hallowed name,  
 For ocular belief.

## XXXVII

OMEGA! GREATEST and the BEST,  
 Stands sacred to the day of rest,  
 For gratitude and thought;  
 Which blessed the world upon his pole, 220  
 And gave the universe his goal,  
 And closed the infernal draught.

## XXXVIII

O DAVID, scholar of the Lord!  
 Such is thy science, whence reward,  
 And infinite degree;  
 O strength, O sweetness, lasting ripe !  
 God's harp thy symbol, and thy type  
 The lion and the bee!

## XXXIX

There is but One who ne'er rebelled,  
 But One by passion unimpelled, 230  
 By pleasures unenticed;  
 He from himself hath semblance sent,  
 Grand object of his own content,  
 And saw the God in CHRIST.

## XL

Tell them, I AM, JEHOVAH said  
 To MOSES; while earth heard in dread,  
 And, smitten to the heart,  
 At once above, beneath, around,  
 All Nature, without voice or sound,  
 Replied, "O LORD, THOU ART." 240

## XLI

Thou art—to give and to confirm,  
 For each his talent and his term;  
 All flesh thy bounties share :  
 Thou shalt not call thy brother fool :  
 The porches of the Christian school  
 Are meekness, peace, and prayer.

## XLII

Open and naked of offence,  
 Man's made of mercy, soul, and sense :  
 God armed the snail and wilk ;  
 Be good to him that pulls thy plough; 250  
 Due food and care, due rest allow  
 For her that yields thee milk.

## XLIII

Rise up before the hoary head,  
And God's benign commandment dread,  
Which says thou shalt not die :  
"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt,"  
Prayed He, whose conscience knew no guilt;  
With Whose blessed pattern vie.

## XLIV

Use all thy passions! love is thine,  
And joy, and jealousy divine; 260  
Thine hope's eternal fort,  
And care thy leisure to disturb  
With fear concupiscence to curb,  
And rapture to transport.

## XLV

Act simply, as occasion asks;  
Put mellow wine in seasoned casks;  
Till not with ass and bull :  
Remember thy baptismal bond;  
Keep from commixtures foul and fond,  
Nor work thy flax with wool. 270

## XLVI

Distribute; pay the Lord His tithe,  
And make the widow's heart-strings blithe;  
Resort with those that weep :  
As you from all and each expect,  
For all and each thy love direct,  
And render as you reap.

## XLVII

The slander and its bearer spurn,  
And propagating praise sojourn,  
To make thy welcome last;  
Turn from old Adam to the New : 280  
By hope futurity pursue :  
Look upwards to the past.





## LIII

Rich almonds colour to the prime  
 For ADORATION; tendrils climb,  
 And fruit-trees pledge their gems;  
 And Ivis, with her gorgeous vest,  
 Builds for her eggs her cunning nest,  
 And bell-flowers bow their stems.

## LIV

With vinous syrup cedars spout;  
 From rocks pure honey gushing out, 320  
 For ADORATION springs:  
 All scenes of painting crowd the map  
 Of nature; to the mermaid's pap  
 The scalèd infant clings.

## LV

The spotted ounce and playsome cubs  
 Run rustling 'mong the flowering shrubs,  
 And lizards feed the moss;  
 For ADORATION beasts embark,  
 While waves upholding halcyon's ark  
 No longer roar and toss. 330

## LVI

While Israel sits beneath his fig,  
 With coral root and amber sprig  
 The weaned adventurer sports;  
 Where to the palm the jasmine cleaves,  
 For ADORATION 'mong the leaves  
 The gale his peace reports.

## LVII

Increasing days their reign exalt,  
 Nor in the pink and mottled vault  
 The opposing spirits tilt;  
 And by the coasting reader spied,  
 The silverlings and crusions glide 340  
 For ADORATION gilt.

## LVIII

For ADORATION ripening cranes,  
And cocoa's purest milk detains  
The western pilgrim's staff;  
Where rain in clasping boughs enclosed,  
And vines with oranges disposed,  
Embower the social laugh.

## LIX

Now labour his reward receives,  
For ADORATION counts his sheaves, 350  
To peace, her bounteous prince;  
The nect'rine his strong tint imbibes,  
And apples of ten thousand tribes,  
And quick peculiar quince.

## LX

The wealthy crops of whitening rice  
'Mongst thyine woods and groves of spice,  
For ADORATION grow;  
And, marshalled in the fencèd land,  
The peaches and pomegranates stand,  
Where wild carnations blow. 360

## LXI

The laurels with the winter strive;  
The crocus burnishes alive  
Upon the snow-clad earth;  
For ADORATION myrtles stay  
To keep the garden from dismay,  
And bless the sight from dearth.

## LXII

The pheasant shows his pompous neck;  
And ermine, jealous of a speck,  
With fear eludes offence :  
The sable, with his glossy pride, 370  
For ADORATION is descried,  
Where frosts the waves condense.

## LXIII

The cheerful holly, pensive yew,  
 And holy thorn, their trim renew;  
     The squirrel hoards his nuts;  
 All creatures batten o'er their stores,  
 And careful nature all her doors  
     For ADORATION shuts.

## LXIV

For ADORATION, DAVID's Psalms  
 Lift up the heart to deeds of alms; 380  
     And he, who kneels and chants,  
 Prevails his passions to control,  
 Finds meat and medicine to the soul,  
     Which for translation pants.

## LXV

For ADORATION, beyond match,  
 The scholar bullfinch aims to catch  
     The soft flute's ivory touch;  
 And, careless, on the hazel spray  
 The daring redbreast keeps at bay  
     The damsel's greedy clutch. 390

## LXVI

For ADORATION, in the skies,  
 The Lord's philosopher espies  
     The dog, the ram, and rose;  
 The planet's ring, Orion's sword;  
 Nor is his greatness less adored  
     In the vile worm that glows.

## LXVII

For ADORATION, on the strings  
 The western breezes work their wings,  
     The captive ear to soothe—  
 Hark! 'tis a voice—how still, and small— 400  
 That makes the cataracts to fall,  
     Or bids the sea be smooth !

## LXVIII

For ADORATION, incense comes  
From bezoar, and Arabian gums,  
And from the civet's fur:  
But as for prayer, or e'er it faints,  
Far better is the breath of saints  
Than galbanum or myrrh.

## LXIX

For ADORATION, from the down  
Of damsons to th' anana's crown, 410  
God sends to tempt the taste;  
And while the luscious zest invites  
The sense, that in the scene delights,  
Commands desire be chaste.

## LXX

For ADORATION, all the paths  
Of grace are open, all the baths,  
Of purity refresh;  
And all the rays of glory beam  
To deck the man of God's esteem,  
Who triumphs o'er the flesh. 420

## LXXI

For ADORATION, in the dome  
Of CHRIST, the sparrows find a home;  
And on his olives perch;  
The swallow also dwells with thee,  
O man of God's humility,  
Within the Saviour's CHURCH.

## LXXII

Sweet is the dew that falls betimes,  
And drops upon the leafy limes;  
Sweet, Hermon's fragrant air:  
Sweet is the lily's silver bell, 430  
And sweet the wakeful tapers' smell  
That watch for early prayer.

## LXXIII

Sweet the young nurse, with love intense,  
Which smiles o'er sleeping innocence;

Sweet when the lost arrive:  
Sweet the musician's ardour beats,  
While his vague mind's in quest of sweets,  
The choicest flowers to hive.

## LXXIV

Sweeter, in all the strains of love,  
The language of thy turtle-dove,

440

Paired to thy swelling chord;  
Sweeter, with every grace endued,  
The glory of thy gratitude  
Respired unto the Lord.

## LXXV

Strong is the horse upon his speed;  
Strong in pursuit the rapid glede,

Which makes at once his game:  
Strong the tall ostrich on the ground;  
Strong through the turbulent profound  
Shoots Xiphias to his aim.

450

## LXXVI

Strong is the lion—like a coal  
His eyeball—like a bastion's mole

His chest against the foes:  
Strong the gier-eagle on his sail,  
Strong against tide the enormous whale  
Emerges as he goes.

## LXXVII

But stronger still in earth and air,  
And in the sea, the man of prayer,

And far beneath the tide:  
And in the seat to faith assigned,  
Where ask is have, where seek is find,  
Where knock is open wide.

460

## LXXVIII

Beauteous the fleet before the gale;  
Beauteous the multitudes in mail,  
    Ranked arms, and crested heads;  
Beauteous the garden's umbrage mild,  
Walk, water, meditated wild,  
    And all the bloomy beds.

## LXXIX

Beauteous the moon full on the lawn;  
And beauteous when the veil's withdrawn,      470  
    The virgin to her spouse:  
Beauteous the temple, decked and filled,  
When to the heaven of heavens they build  
    Their heart-directed vows.

## LXXX

Beauteous, yea beauteous more than these,  
The Shepherd King upon his knees,  
    For his momentous trust;  
With wish of infinite conceit,  
For man, beast, mute, the small and great,  
    And prostrate dust to dust.      480

## LXXXI

Precious the bounteous widow's mite;  
And precious, for extreme delight,  
    The largess from the churl:  
Precious the ruby's blushing blaze,  
And alba's blest imperial rays,  
    And pure cerulean pearl.

## LXXXII

Precious the penitential tear;  
And precious is the sigh sincere;  
    Acceptable to God:  
And precious are the winning flowers,      490  
In gladsome Israel's feast of bowers,  
    Bound on the hallowed sod.



75. *sempiternal* : Latin, *semper* = always.
83. *Ziba* : a servant of Saul.
83. *Mephibosheth* : the son of Jonathan. See especially 2 Samuel xix. 29.
101. *Michal* : Saul's second daughter. See 1 Samuel xviii. 20, 27, 28.
102. *Abishag* : the Shunammite woman. (1 Kings ii. 17-22.)
118. *briny broad* : a fleeting touch here of eighteenth century conventional language.
124. *The multitudinous abyss* : See Job xxviii. 1-12. Smart may also have read the vivid description of the abyss in Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1681).
146. *sleek tigers . . . mining coney* : Notice the aptness of the epithets.
- 173-4. *so brave . . . so good* : This is simplicity so excessive as to border on the ludicrous.
228. *The lion and the bee* : symbols of strength and sweetness.
- 249-252. *God armed . . . yields thee milk* : Smart's exaltation of spirit carries the poem to the heights ; these lapses into mistaken simplicity are rare.
- 289-290. David was one of the Nine Worthies. These were three Jews : Joshua, David, and Judas Maccabeus ; three pagans : Hector of Troy, Alexander the Great, and Julius Cæsar ; and three champions of Christianity : King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godefroy de Bouillon.
294. Fantastical conceptions as contrasted with the genuine word.
310. *Polyanthus* is the subject. *Checks* is used in the sense of dapples. Cf. Milton's, "dancing in the checkered shade." Here it means that the polyanthus dapples the grass with purple.
316. *Ivis* : possibly the ibis, a species of heron held sacred by the Egyptians.
317. *cunning* : skilfully contrived.
325. *ounce* : the lynx.
329. A species of kingfisher which at the winter solstice had the power of quietening winds and waves while its young were hatching in the nest.
- 337-342. This stanza obviously refers to summer and presumably the first three lines draw attention to the absence of storms. The last three lines are the difficulty.
- (1) The reader (or observer) who is going along by the coast can see the bright rays of the sun on the sea making silverlings (or *shekels*, the chief Hebrew silver coin) and *crusions* (or crowns, from the *cross* with which they were marked).
- (2) The *coasting* reader (or observer) *even though on the move*, cannot fail to notice in the clear summer night the



bright stars (*silverlings*, shekels and *crusions*, crowns). Thus the first three lines would refer to summer days and the last three to summer nights.

I am not happy about either explanation.—A.R.M.

348. *Embower the social laugh*. This is artificial diction at its worst. He may be making an oblique reference to a wedding.
354. *quick peculiar quince*: An unusual association of ideas. *Quick* probably means *sharp to the taste*. There is something very moving in this sanctification of small things.
356. *thyine*: the name of a species of conifer. The noun is written *thuya* from the Greek *θύα*.
373. *cheerful holly, pensive yew*: Here and there the eighteenth century love of apt epithets peeps through.
386. *scholar bullfinch* because he is trying to learn how to reproduce the note of the flute.
408. *galbanum*: a resin obtained from Persian trees of the species *Ferula*.
408. *myrrh*: another kind of gum resin.
410. *anana*: the pineapple.
- 427-444. The purest spirit of lyrical poetry breathes in these verses.
446. *glede*: kite.
450. *Xiphias*: the swordfish.
454. *gier-eagle*: Compare "gerfalcon." The *ger* is by some scholars derived from the same root as *greedy* and, by others, from the Latin *gyrus* which gives the idea of circling in flight. Most probably the bird mentioned here is the vulture. In Holland's *Pliny* there is a chapter on "Vultures or Geires."
- 466-468. *umbrage and bloomy beds*: Again an artificiality of diction peeps through.
483. *churl*: Not used in the modern sense of uncouth, ill-bred fellow, but rather in the sense of "poor peasant."
485. *alba*: Obviously a precious stone of some kind, and possibly the diamond. It is not mentioned in the Bible either in Exodus (the high priest's breastplate) or in Revelation (description of the New Jerusalem). There is much uncertainty about these precious stones.
486. *cerulean*: sky-blue.
- 493-516. The poem is ending with a rapturous outburst, but in the last stanza returns to remind us of the force of meekness and faith.

## MICHAEL

## A PASTORAL POEM

If from the public way you turn your steps  
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,  
You will suppose that with an upright path,  
Your feet must struggle ; in such bold ascent  
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.  
But, courage ! for around that boisterous brook  
The mountains have all opened out themselves,  
And made a hidden valley of their own.  
No habitation can be seen ; but they  
Who journey thither find themselves alone 10  
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites  
That overhead are sailing in the sky.  
It is in truth an utter solitude ;  
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell  
But for one object which you might pass by,  
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook  
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones !  
And to that simple object appertains  
A story—unenriched with strange events,  
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20  
Or for the summer shade. It was the first  
Of those domestic tales that spake to me  
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men  
Whom I already loved ;—not verily  
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills  
Where was their occupation and abode.  
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy,  
Careless of books, yet having felt the power  
Of Nature, by the gentle agency  
Of natural objects, led me on to feel 30  
For passions that were not my own, and think  
(At random and imperfectly indeed)  
On man, the heart of man, and human life.

Therefore, although it be a history  
Homely and rude, I will relate the same  
For the delight of a few natural hearts ;  
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake  
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills  
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale 40  
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name ;  
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.  
His bodily frame had been from youth to age  
Of an unusual strength : his mind was keen,  
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,  
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt  
And watchful more than ordinary men.  
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,  
Of blasts of every tone ; and oftentimes,  
When others heeded not, he heard the South 50  
Make subterraneous music, like the noise  
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.  
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock  
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,  
" The winds are now devising work for me ! "  
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives  
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him  
Up to the mountains : he had been alone  
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,  
That came to him, and left him, on the heights. 60  
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.  
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose  
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,  
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts  
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed  
The common air ; hills, which with vigorous step  
He had so often climbed ; which had impressed  
So many incidents upon his mind  
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;  
Which, like a book, preserved the memory 70

Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,  
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts  
 The certainty of honourable gain ;  
 Those fields, those hills—what could they less?—had  
     laid  
 Strong hold on his affections, were to him  
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,  
 The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness. /  
 His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—  
 Though younger than himself full twenty years.      80  
 She was a woman of a stirring life,  
 Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had  
 Of antique form ; this large, for spinning wool ;  
 That sn all, for flax ; and, if one wheel had rest,  
 It was because the other was at work.  
 The Pair had but one inmate in their house,  
 An only Child, who had been born to them  
 When Michael, telling o'er his years, began  
 To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,  
 With one foot in the grave. This only Son,      90  
 With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,  
 The one of an inestimable worth,  
 Made all their household. I may truly say,  
 That they were as a proverb in the vale  
 For endless industry. When day was gone,  
 And from their occupations out of doors  
 The Son and Father were come home, even then,  
 Their labour did not cease ; unless when all  
 Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,  
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,      100  
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,  
 And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal  
 Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)  
 And his old Father both betook themselves  
 To such convenient work as might employ  
 Their hands by the fireside ; perhaps to card

Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair  
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,  
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge, 110  
That in our ancient uncouth country style  
With huge and black projection over-browed  
Large space beneath, as duly as the light  
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp ;  
An aged utensil, which had performed  
Service beyond all others of its kind.  
Early at evening did it burn—and late,  
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,  
Which, going by from year to year, had found,  
And left, the couple neither gay perhaps 120  
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,  
Living a life of eager industry.  
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,  
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,  
Father and Son, while far into the night  
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,  
Making the cottage through the silent hours  
Murmur as with the sound of summer-flies.  
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,  
And was a public symbol of the life 130  
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,  
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground  
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,  
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,  
And westward to the village near the lake ;  
And from this constant light, so regular,  
And so far seen, the House itself, by all  
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,  
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years, 140  
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs  
Have loved his Helpmate ; but to Michael's heart

This son of his old age was yet more dear—  
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same  
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—  
Than that a child, more than all other gifts  
That earth can offer to declining man,  
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,  
And stirrings of inquietude, when they  
By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150  
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,  
His heart and his heart's joy ! For oftentimes  
Old Michael, when he was a babe in arms,  
Had done him female service, not alone  
For pastime and delight, as is the use  
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced  
To acts of tenderness ; and he had rocked  
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And in a later time, ere yet the Boy  
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love, 160  
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,  
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he  
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool  
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched  
Under the large old oak, that near his door  
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,  
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,  
Thence in our rustic dialect was called  
The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.  
There, while they two were sitting in the shade, 170  
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,  
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks  
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed  
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep  
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts  
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up  
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek

Two steady roses that were five years old ;  
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut 180  
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped  
With iron, making it throughout in all  
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,  
And gave it to the Boy, wherewith equipt  
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed  
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the dock ;  
And, to his office prematurely called,  
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,  
Something between a hindrance and a help ;  
And for this cause not always, I believe, 190  
Receiving from his Father hire of praise ;  
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,  
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand  
Against the mountain blasts ; and to the heights,  
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,  
He with his Father daily went, and they  
Were as companions, why should I relate  
That objects which the Shepherd loved before  
Were dearer now ? that from the Boy there came 200  
Feelings and emanations—things which were  
Light to the sun and music to the wind ;  
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again ?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up :  
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,  
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived  
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came  
Distressful tidings. Long before the time  
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound 210  
In surety for his brother's son, a man  
Of an industrious life, and ample means ;  
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly

Had prest upon him ; and old Michael now  
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,  
A grievous penalty, but little less  
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,  
At the first hearing, for a moment took  
More hope out of his life than he supposed  
That any old man ever could have lost. 220  
As soon as he had armed himself with strength  
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed  
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once  
A portion of his patrimonial fields.  
Such was his first resolve ; he thought again,  
And his heart failed him. " Isabel," said he,  
Two evenings after he had heard the news,  
" I have been toiling more than seventy years,  
And in the open sunshine of God's love  
Have we all lived ; yet, if these fields of ours 230  
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think  
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.  
Our lot is a hard lot ; the sun himself  
Has scarcely been more diligent than I ;  
And I have lived to be a fool at last  
To my own family. An evil man  
That was, and made an evil choice, if he  
Were false to us ; and, if he were not false,  
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this  
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him ;—but 240  
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

When I began, my purpose was to speak  
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.  
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel ; the land  
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free ;  
He shall possess it, free as is the wind  
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,  
Another kinsman—he will be our friend  
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,  
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go, 250  
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift



He quickly will repair this loss, and then  
He may return to us. If here he stay,  
What can be done? Where every one is poor,  
What can be gained?"

At this the old Man paused  
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind  
Was busy, looking back into past times.  
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,  
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door  
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence, 26c  
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought  
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;  
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad  
Went up to London, found a master there,  
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy  
To go and overlook his merchandise  
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,  
And left estates and monies to the poor,  
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel floored  
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands. 27c  
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,  
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,  
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,  
And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this scheme  
These two days has been meat and drink to me.  
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.

We have enough—I wish indeed that I  
Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.  
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best  
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth 28c  
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:  
If he could go, the Boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth  
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days  
Was restless morn and night, and all day long  
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare  
Things needful for the journey of her son.

But Isabel was glad when Sunday came  
 To stop her in her work : for, when she lay  
 By Michael's side, she through the last two nights 290  
 Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep :  
 And when they rose at morning she could see  
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon  
 She said to Luke, while they two by themselves  
 Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go :  
 We have no other Child but thee to lose,  
 None to remember—do not go away,  
 For if thou leave thy Father he will die."  
 The Youth made answer with a jocund voice ;  
 And Isabel, when she had told her fears, 300  
 Recovered heart. That evening her best fare  
 Did she bring forth, and all together sat  
 Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work ;  
 And all the ensuing week the house appeared  
 As cheerful as a grove in Spring : at length  
 The expected letter from their kinsman came,  
 With kind assurances that he would do  
 His utmost for the welfare of the Boy ;  
 To which, requests were added, that forthwith 310  
 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more  
 The letter was read over ; Isabel  
 Went forth to show it to the neighbours round ;  
 Nor was there at that time on English land  
 A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel  
 Had to her house returned, the old Man said,  
 "He shall depart to-morrow." To this word  
 The Housewife answered, talking much of things  
 Which, if at such short notice he should go,  
 Would surely be forgotten. But at length 320  
 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,  
 In that deep valley, Michael had designed

To build a Sheepfold ; and, before he heard  
The tidings of his melancholy loss,  
For this same purpose he had gathered up  
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge  
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.  
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked :  
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped, 330  
And thus the old Man spake to him :—" My Son,  
To-morrow thou wilt leave me : with full heart  
I look upon thee, for thou art the same  
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,  
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.  
I will relate to thee some little part  
Of our two histories ; 'twill do thee good  
When thou art from me, even if I should touch  
On things thou canst not know of.—After thou  
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls 340  
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away  
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue  
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,  
And still I loved thee with increasing love.  
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds  
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside  
First uttering, without words, a natural tune ;  
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy  
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,  
And in the open fields my life was passed 350  
And on the mountains ; else I think that thou  
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.  
But we were playmates, Luke : among these hills,  
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young  
Have played together, nor with me didst thou  
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."  
Luke had a manly heart ; but at these words  
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand.  
And said, " Nay, do not take it so—I see  
That these are things of which I need not speak. 360  
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee

A kind and a good Father : and herein  
I but repay a gift which I myself  
Received at others' hands ; for, though now old  
Beyond the common life of man, I still  
Remember them who loved me in my youth.  
Both of them sleep together : here they lived,  
As all their Forefathers had done ; and, when  
At length their time was come, they were not loth  
To give their bodies to the family mould. 370  
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived,  
But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,  
And see so little gain from threescore years.  
These fields were burdened when they came to me ;  
Till I was forty years of age, not more  
Than half of my inheritance was mine.  
I toiled and toiled ; God blessed me in my work,  
And till these three weeks past the land was free.  
—It looks as if it never could endure  
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke, 380  
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good  
That thou shouldst go." At this the old Man paused ;  
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,  
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed :  
" This was a work for us ; and now, my Son,  
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—  
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.  
Nay, Boy, be of good hope ;—we both may live  
To see a better day. At eighty-four  
I still am strong and hale ;—do thou thy part ; 390  
I will do mine.—I will begin again  
With many tasks that were resigned to thee :  
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,  
Will I without thee go again, and do  
All works which I was wont to do alone,  
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy !  
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast  
With many hopes ; it should be so—yes—yes—  
I knew that thou couldst never have a wish

To leave me, Luke : thou hast been bound to me 400  
 Only by links of love : when thou art gone,  
 What will be left to us !—But I forget  
 My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,  
 As I requested ; and hereafter, Luke,  
 When thou art gone away, should evil men  
 Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,  
 And of this moment ; hither turn thy thoughts,  
 And God will strengthen thee : amid all fear  
 And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou  
 May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived, 410  
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause  
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—  
 When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see  
 A work which is not here : a covenant  
 'Twill be between us ; but, whatever fate  
 Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,  
 And bear thy memory with me to the grave.”

The Shepherd ended here ; and Luke stooped down,  
 And, as his Father had requested, laid  
 The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight 420  
 The old Man's grief broke from him ; to his heart  
 He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept ;  
 And to the house together they returned.  
 —Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,  
 Ere the night fell :—with morrow's dawn the Boy  
 Began his journey, and, when he had reached  
 The public way, he put on a bold face ;  
 And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,  
 Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,  
 That followed him till he was out of sight. 430

A good report did from their Kinsman come,  
 Of Luke and his well-doing : and the Boy  
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,  
 Which as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout  
 “ The prettiest letters that were ever seen.”

Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.  
So, many months passed on : and once again  
The Shepherd went about his daily work  
With confident and cheerful thoughts ; and now  
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour 440  
He to that valley took his way, and there  
Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began  
To slacken in his duty ; and, at length,  
He in the dissolute city gave himself  
To evil courses : ignominy and shame  
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last  
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love ;  
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else  
Would upset the brain, or break the heart : 450  
I have' conversed with more than one who well  
Remembered the old Man, and what he was  
Years after he had heard this heavy news.  
His bodily frame had been from youth to age  
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks  
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,  
And listened to the wind ; and, as before,  
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,  
And for the land, his small inheritance.  
And to that hollow dell from time to time 460  
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which  
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet  
The pity which was then in every heart  
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all  
That many and many a day he thither went,  
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen  
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,  
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.  
The length of full seven years, from time to time, 470  
He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,

And left the work unfinished when he died.  
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel  
 Survive her Husband : at her death the estate  
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.  
 The Cottage which was named THE EVENING STAR  
 Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground  
 On which it stood ; great changes have been wrought  
 In all the neighbourhood :—yet the Oak is left  
 That grew beside their door ; and the remains 480  
 Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen  
 Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

2. *Ghyll* : This appears to be Wordsworth's own spelling for *gill*, a deep, wooded ravine.
3. *You will suppose* : The poet makes at once a direct appeal.
5. *pastoral* : belonging to the shepherds.
15. *one object which you might pass by* : He continues to speak directly to the reader.
75. The omission of "and" before *were* makes for a slight intensification of the feeling.
76. *feeling of blind love* : *blind* because it was not examined critically or consciously made into a philosophy.
85. *It was because the other was at work* : At times Wordsworth indulges in too much simplicity.
126. *plied her own peculiar work* : cf. Gray's "Elegy" :  
     Or busy housewife ply her evening care.  
*Peculiar* here means exclusively her own work.
- 144-145. *the same fond spirit that blindly works* : the paternal instinct.
150. *tendency of nature* : natural course of things.
188. *urchin* : pert little fellow. The word is not used here in a derogatory sense.
191. *hire of praise* : his hire or wages expressed in terms of his father's words of approval.
201. *Feelings and emanations* : cf. Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" : "Heaven lies about us in our infancy."
211. *surety* : he had guaranteed repayments on his nephew's behalf, but the latter having defaulted, Michael had to pay the debts.
224. *patrimonial* . his by inheritance from his forefathers.
327. *A heap of stones* : cf. line 17.

374. *burdened*: under a mortgage. He would not have the title deeds until the mortgage had been paid. For forty-four years he had been paying interest and had gradually paid off the capital.
410. *May'st bear in mind the life my Fathers Lived*: Family tradition was strong among these shepherd folk. Luke had to leave home, but he could still keep with him its high traditions.
466. *And never lifted up a single stone*: Notice the pregnant simplicity of this line.
479. *yet the Oak is left*: There is some consolation in the thought that Nature is permanent, that there is still a witness of the simple life led by this good old man. Compare this ending with that of "Sohrab and Rustum."

## RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

### I

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night;  
 The rain came heavily and fell in floods;  
 But now the sun is rising calm and bright;  
 The birds are singing in the distant woods;  
 Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;  
 The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;  
 And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

### II

All things that love the sun are out of doors;  
 The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;  
 The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the moors 10  
 The hare is running races in her mirth;  
 And with her feet she from the plashy earth  
 Raises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,  
 Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

### III

I was a Traveller then upon the moor;  
 I saw the hare that raced about with joy;



I heard the woods and distant waters roar;  
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:  
The pleasant season did my heart employ:  
My old remembrances went from me wholly; 20  
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

## IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might  
Of joy in minds that can no further go,  
As high as we have mounted in delight  
In our dejection do we sink as low;  
To me that morning did it happen so;  
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;  
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor  
could name.

## V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;  
And I bethought me of the playful hare: 30  
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;  
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;  
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;  
But there may come another day to me—  
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

## VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,  
As if life's business were a summer mood;  
As if all needful things would come unsought  
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;  
But how can he expect that others should 40  
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call  
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

## VII

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,  
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;  
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy  
Following his plough, along the mountain-side :

By our own spirits are we deified :  
 We Poets in our youth begin in gladness ;  
 But thereof come in the end despondency and  
 madness.

## VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace, 50  
 A leading from above, a something given,  
 Yet it befell that, in this lonely place,  
 When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,  
 Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven  
 I saw a Man before me unawares :  
 The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

## IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie  
 Couched on the bald top of an eminence ;  
 Wonder to ail who do the same espy,  
 By what means it could thither come, and whence ; 60  
 So that it seems a thing endued with sense :  
 Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf  
 Of rock or sand reposes, there to sun itself ;

Such seemed this ~~Man, not all alive~~ nor dead,  
 Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age ;  
 His body was bent double, feet and head  
 Coming together in life's pilgrimage ;  
 As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage  
 Of sickness felt by him in times long past,  
 A more than human weight upon his frame had  
 cast. 70

## XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,  
 Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood :  
 And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,  
 Upon the margin of that moorish flood  
 Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,

That heareth not the loud winds when they call ;  
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

## XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond  
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look  
Upon the muddy water, which he conned, 80  
As if he had been reading in a book :  
And now a stranger's privilege I took ;  
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,  
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

## XIII

A gentle answer did the old Man make,  
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew :  
And him with further words I thus bespake,  
"What occupation do you there pursue?  
This is a lonesome place for one like you."  
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise 90  
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

## XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,  
But each in solemn order followed each,  
With something of a lofty utterance drest—  
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach  
Of ordinary men ; a stately speech ;  
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,  
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

## XV

He told, that to these waters he had come  
To gather leeches, being old and poor : 100  
Employment hazardous and wearisome !  
And he had many hardships to endure :  
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor ;  
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance ;  
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

## XVI

The old Man still stood talking by my side ;  
But now his voice to me was like a stream  
Scarce heard ; nor word from word could I divide ;  
And the whole body of the Man did seem  
Like one whom I had met with in a dream ;     110  
Or like a man from some far region sent,  
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

## XVII

My former thoughts returned : the fear that kills ;  
And hope that is unwilling to be fed ;  
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills ;  
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.  
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,  
My question eagerly did I renew,  
“ How is it that you live, and what is it you do ? ”

## XVIII

He with a smile did then his words repeat ;     120  
And said that, gathering leeches, far and wide  
He travelled ; stirring thus about his feet  
The waters of the pools where they abide.  
“ Once I could meet with them on every side ;  
But they have dwindled long by slow decay ;  
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may.”

## XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,  
The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled me :  
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace  
About the weary moors continually,     130  
Wandering about alone and silently.  
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,  
He, having made a pause, the same discourse  
renewed.

## XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,  
 Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind.  
 But stately in the main ; and, when he ended,  
 I could have laughed myself to scorn to find  
 In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.  
 " God," said I, " be my help and stay secure ;  
 I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely 140  
 moor ! "

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

45. *Him who walked . . . mountain-side* : Robert Burns.CHRISTABEL<sup>1</sup>

## PART THE FIRST

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,  
 And the owls have awakened the crowing cock ;  
 Tu-whit !—Tu-whoo !  
 And hark, again ! the crowing cock,  
 How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,  
 Hath a toothless mastiff, which  
 From her kennel beneath the rock  
 Maketh answer to the clock,  
 Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour ; 10  
 Ever and aye, by shine and shower,  
 Sixteen short howls, not over loud ;  
 Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

<sup>1</sup>This poem was begun almost immediately after the completion of " The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Its atmosphere is even more rarefied. The metre, the four-foot couplet, is common enough, but Coleridge uses it with great variety and subtlety of effect.

Is the night chilly and dark ?  
The night is chilly, but not dark.  
The thin grey cloud is spread on high,  
It covers but not hides the sky.  
The moon is behind, and at the full ;  
And yet she looks both small and dull.  
The night is chill, the cloud is grey : 20  
'Tis a month before the month of May,  
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,  
Whom her father loves so well,  
What makes her in the wood so late,  
A furlong from the castle gate ?  
She had dreams all yesternight  
Of her own betrothed knight ;  
And she in the midnight wood will pray  
For the weal of her lover that's far away. 30

She stole along, she nothing spoke,  
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,  
And nought was green upon the oak,  
But moss and rarest mistletoe :  
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,  
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,  
The lovely lady Christabel !  
It moaned as near, as near can be,  
But what it is, she cannot tell. 40  
On the other side it seems to be,  
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill ; the forest bare ;  
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak ?  
There is not wind enough in the air  
To move away the ringlet curl  
From the lovely lady's cheek—

There is not wind enough to twirl  
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
That dances as often as dance it can, 50  
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart ! Christabel !  
Jesu, Maria, shield her well !  
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,  
And stole to the other side of the oak.  
What sees she there ?

There she sees a damsel bright,  
Drest in a sliken robe of white,  
That shadowy in the moonlight shone : 60  
The neck that made that white robe wan,  
Her stately neck, and arms were bare ;  
Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were  
And wildly glittered here and there  
The gems entangled in her hair.  
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see  
A lady so richly clad as she—  
Beautiful exceedingly !

“ Mary mother, save me now ! ”  
(Said Christabel) “ And who art thou ? ” 70

The lady strange made answer meet,  
And her voice was faint and sweet :—  
“ Have pity on my sore distress,  
I scarce can speak for weariness :  
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear ! ”  
Said Christabel, “ How camest thou here ? ”  
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,  
Did thus pursue her answer meet :—

“ My sire is of a noble line,  
And my name is Geraldine : 80

Five warriors seized me yesternorn,  
 Me, even me, a maid forlon :  
 They chocked my cries with force and fright,  
 And tied me on a palfrey white.

The palfrey was as fleet as wind,  
 And they rode furiously behind.  
 They spurred amain, their steeds were white ;  
 And once we crossed the shade of night.  
 As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,  
 I have no thought what men they be ; 90  
 Nor do I know how long it is  
 (For I have lain entranced I wis)  
 Since one, the tallest of the five,  
 Took me from the palfrey's back,  
 A weary woman, scarce alive,  
 Some muttered words his comrades spoke :  
 He placed me underneath this oak.  
 He swore they would return with haste ;  
 Whither they went I cannot tell—  
 I thought I heard, some minutes past, 100  
 Sounds as of a castle-bell.  
 Stretch forth thy hand " (thus ended she),  
 " And help a wretched maid to flee."

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand  
 And comforted fair Geraldine :  
 " O well, bright dame ! may you command  
 The service of Sir Leoline ;  
 And gladly our stout chivalry  
 Will he send forth and friends withal  
 To guide and guard you safe and free 110  
 Home to your noble father's hall."

She rose : and forth with steps they passed  
 That strove to be, and were not, fast.

Her gracious stars the lady blest,  
 And thus spake on sweet Christabel :



"All our household are at rest,  
The hall as silent as the cell ;  
Sir Leoline is weak in health  
And may not well awakened be,  
But we will move as if in stealth  
And I beseech your courtesy.  
This night to share your couch with me."

120

They crossed the moat, and Christabel  
Took the key that fitted well ;  
A little door she opened straight,  
All in the middle of the gate ;  
The gate that was ironed within and without,  
Where an army in battle array had marched out.  
The lady sank, belike through pain,  
And Christabel with might and main  
Lifted her up, a weary weight,  
Over the threshold of the gate ;  
Then the lady rose again,  
And moved, as she were not in pain.  
So free from danger, free from fear,  
They crossed the court : right glad they were.  
And Christabel devoutly cried  
To the lady by her side,  
"Praise we the Virgin all divine  
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress !" 140  
"Alas, alas !" said Geraldine,  
"I cannot speak for weariness."  
So free from danger, free from fear,  
They crossed the court : right glad they were.

Outside her kennel the mastiff old  
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.  
The mastiff old did not awake,  
Yet she an angry moan did make !  
And what can ail the mastiff bitch ?  
Never till now she uttered yell  
Beneath the eye of Christabel.

150

Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch :  
For what can ail the mastiff bitch ?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,  
Pass as lightly as you will!  
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,  
Amid their own white ashes lying;  
But when the lady passed, there came  
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;  
And Christabel saw the lady's eye, 160  
And nothing else saw she thereby,  
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,  
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.  
" O softly tread," said Christabel,  
" My father seldom sleepeth well."

Sweet Christabel! her feet doth bare,  
And jealous of the listening air  
They steal their way from stair to stair,  
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,  
And now they pass the Baron's room, 170  
As still as death, with stifled breath !  
And now have reached her chamber door ;  
And now doth Geraldine press down  
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,  
And not a moonbeam enters here.  
But they without its light can see  
The chamber carved so curiously,  
Carved with figures strange and sweet,  
All made out of the carver's brain, 180  
For a lady's chamber meet :  
The lamp with twofold silver chain  
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim ;  
But Christabel the lamp will trim.

She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,  
And left it swinging to and fro,  
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,  
Sank down upon the floor below.

“ O weary lady, Geraldine,  
I pray you, drink this cordial wine !  
It is a wine of virtuous powers ;  
My mother made it of wild flowers.” 190

“ And will your mother pity me,  
Who am a maiden most forlorn ?”  
Christabel answered—“ Woe is me !  
She died the hour that I was born.  
I have heard the grey-haired friar tell,  
How on her deathbed she did say,  
That she should hear the castle-bell 200  
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.  
O mother dear ! that thou wert here !”  
“ I would”, said Geraldine, “ she were !”

But soon with altered voice, said she—  
“ Off, wandering mother ! Peak and pine,  
I have power to bid thee flee,”  
Alas ! what ails poor Geraldine ?  
Why stares she with unsettled eye ?  
Can she the bodiless dead espy ?  
And why with hollow voice cries she, 210  
“ Off, woman, off ! this hour is mine—  
Though thou her guardian spirit be,  
Off, woman, off ! 'tis given to me.”

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,  
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—  
“ Alas !” said she ; “ this ghastly ride—  
Dear lady ! it hath wildered you !”  
The lady wiped her moist cold brow  
And faintly said, “ 'Tis over now !”

Again the wild-flower wine she drank : 220  
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,  
And from the floor whereon she sank,  
The lofty lady stood upright;  
She was most beautiful to see,  
Like a lady of a far countree.

And thus the lofty lady spake—  
“ All they who live in the upper sky,  
Do love you, holy Christabel !  
And you love them, and for their sake  
And for the good which me befell, 230  
Even I in my degree will try,  
Fair maiden, to requite you well.  
But now unrobe yourself ; for I  
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.”

Quoth Christabel, “ So let it be ! ”  
And as the lady bade, did she.  
Her gentle limbs did she undress,  
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe  
So many thoughts moved to and fro, 240  
That vain it were her lids to close ;  
So half-way from the bed she rose,  
And on her elbow did recline  
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,  
And slowly rolled her eyes around ;  
Then drawing in her breath aloud,  
Like one that shuddered, she unbound  
The <sup>girdle</sup> ~~cincture~~ from beneath her breast :  
Her silken robe, and inner vest, 250  
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,  
Behold ! her bosom and half her side—  
A sight to dream of, not to tell !  
O shield her ! shield sweet Christabel !

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs ;  
 Ah ! what a stricken look was hers !  
 Deep from within she seems half-way  
 To lift some weight with sick assay,  
 And eyes the maid and seeks delay ;  
 Then suddenly as one defied 250  
 Collects herself in scorn and pride,  
 And lay down by the Maiden's side !—  
 And in her arms the maid she took,  
     Ah wel-a-day !  
 And with low voice and doleful look  
 These words did say :  
 " In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,  
 Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel !  
 Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,  
 This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow ; 270  
     But vainly thou warrest,  
     But this is alone in  
     Thy power to declare,  
     That in the dim forest  
     Thou heard'st a low moaning,  
 And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair :  
 And didst bring her home with thee in love and in  
     charity,  
 To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

#### THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE FIRST

It was a lovely sight to see 280  
 The lady Christabel, when she  
 Was praying at the old oak tree.  
     Amid the jagged shadows  
     Of mossy leafless boughs,  
     Kneeling in the moonlight,  
     To make her gentle vows ;  
 Her slender palms together prest,  
 Heaving sometimes on her breast ;  
 Her face resigned to bliss or bale—

Her face, oh call it fair not pale,  
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,      290  
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me !)  
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,  
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,  
Dreaming that alone, which is—  
O sorrow and shame ! Can this be she,  
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree ?  
And lo ! the worker of these harms,  
That holds the maiden in her arms,  
Seems to slumber still and mild,      300  
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,  
O Geraldine ! since arms of thine  
Have been the lovely lady's prison.  
O Geraldine ! one hour was thine—  
Thou'st had thy will ! By tairn and rill,  
The night-birds all that hour were still.  
But now they are jubilant anew,  
From cliff and tower, tu-whoo ! tu-whoo !  
Tu-whoo ! tu-whoo ! from wood and fell !      310

And see ! the lady Christabel  
Gathers herself from out her trance ;  
Her limbs relax, her countenance  
Grows sad and soft ; the smooth thin lids  
Close o'er her eyes ; and tears she sheds—  
Large tears that leave the lashes bright !  
And oft the while she seems to smile  
As infants at a sudden light !

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,  
Like a youthful hermitess,      320  
Beauteous in a wilderness,  
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.

And, if she move unquietly,  
 Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,  
 Comes back and tingles in her feet.  
 No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.  
 What if her guardian spirit 'twere?  
 What if she knew her mother near?  
 But this she knows, in joys and woes,  
 That saints will aid if men will call:  
 For the blue sky bends over all!

330

PART THE SECOND<sup>1</sup>

"Each matin bell," the Baron saith,  
 "Knells us back to a world of death."  
 These words Sir Leoline first said,  
 When he rose and found his lady dead:  
 These words Sir Leoline will say,  
 Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began,  
 That still at dawn the sacristan,  
 Who duly pulls the heavy bell,  
 Five and forty beads must tell  
 Between each stroke—a warning knell,  
 Which not a soul can choose but hear  
 From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

340

Saith Bracy the bard, "So let it knell!  
 And let the drowsy sacristan  
 Still count as slowly as he can!  
 There is no lack of such, I ween  
 As well fill up the space between.  
 In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,  
 And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,  
 With ropes of rock and bells of air

350

<sup>1</sup> Some critics consider that the Second Part is not consistently in accord with the delicacy and subtlety of Coleridge's original design.

Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,  
Who all give back, one after t'other,  
The death-note to their living brother ;  
And oft too, by the knell offended,  
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,  
The devil mocks the doleful tale  
With a merry peal from Borrowdale."

The air is still! through mist and cloud 360  
That merry peal comes ringing loud ;  
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,  
And rises lightly from the bed ;  
Puts on her silken vestments white,  
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,  
And nothing doubting of her spell  
Awakens the lady Christabel.  
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel ?  
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied 370  
The same who lay down by her side—  
O rather say, the same whom she  
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!  
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!  
For she belike hath drunken deep  
Of all the blessedness of sleep!  
And while she spake, her looks, her air  
Such gentle thankfulness declare,  
That (so it seemed) her girded vests  
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts. 380  
"Sure I have sinned!" said Christabel,  
"Now heaven be praised if all be well!"  
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,  
Did she the lofty lady greet  
With such perplexity of mind  
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed  
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed



That He, who on the cross did groan,  
Might wash away her sins unknown,  
She forthwith led fair Geraldine  
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.  
The lovely maid and the lady tall  
Are pacing both into the hall,  
And pacing on through page and groom  
Enter the Baron's presence-room. 390

The Baron rose, and while he prest  
His gentle daughter to his breast,  
With cheerful wonder in his eyes  
The lady Geraldine espies,  
And gave such welcome to the same,  
As might beseem so bright a dame! 400

But when he heard the lady's tale,  
And when she told her father's name,  
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,  
Murmuring o'er the name again,  
"Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?"

Alas! they had been friends in youth;  
But whispering tongues can poison truth;  
And constancy lives in realms above;;  
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;  
And to be wroth with one we love,  
Doth work like madness in the brain.  
And thus it chanced, as I divine,  
With Roland and Sir Leoline.  
Each spake words of high disdain  
And insult to his heart's best brother:  
They parted—ne'er to meet again!  
But never either found another  
To free the hollow heart from paining—  
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;  
A dreary sea now flows between. 410 420

But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,  
Shall wholly do away, I ween,  
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,  
Stood gazing on a damsel's face.  
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine  
Came back upon his heart again.

430

O then the Baron forgot his age,  
His noble heart swelled high with rage :  
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side,  
He would proclaim it far and wide  
With trump and solemn heraldry,  
That they, who thus had wronged the dame,  
Were base as spotted infamy !  
" And if they dare deny the same,  
My herald shall appoint a week  
And let the recreant traitors seek  
My tourney court—that there and then  
I may dislodge their reptile souls  
From the bodies and forms of men ! "  
He spake : his eye in lightning rolls !  
For the lady was ruthlessly seized ; and he kenned  
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend)

440

And now the tears were on his face,  
And fondly in his arms he took  
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,  
Prolonging it with joyous look,  
Which when she viewed, a vision fell  
Upon the soul of Christabel,  
The vision of fear, the touch and pain !  
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—  
(Ah, woe is me ! Was it for thee,  
Thou gentle maid ! such sights to see ?)

450

Again she saw that bosom old,  
Again she felt that bosom cold,

And drew in her breath with a hissing sound :  
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round, 460  
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid  
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,  
And in its stead that vision blest,  
Which comforted her after-rest,  
While in the lady's arms she lay,  
Had put a rapture in her breast,  
And on her lips and o'er her eyes  
Spread smiles like light !

With new surprise,  
" What ails then my belovèd child ? " 470  
The Baron said—His daughter mild  
Made answer, " All will yet be well ! "  
I ween, she had no power to tell  
Aught else : so mighty was the spell.

Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,  
Had deemed her such a thing divine.  
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,  
As if she feared she had offended  
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid !  
And with such lowly tones she prayed 480  
She might be sent without delay  
Home to her father's mansion.

" Nay !  
Nay, by my soul ! " said Leoline.  
" Ho ! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine !  
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,  
And take two steeds with trappings proud,  
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best  
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,  
And clothe you both in solemn vest,  
And over the mountains haste along, 490  
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,  
Detain you on the valley road.

And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,  
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes  
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,  
And reaches soon that castle good  
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,  
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,  
More loud than your horses' echoing feet! 500  
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,  
"Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!  
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—  
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.  
He bids thee come without delay  
With all thy numerous array;  
And take thy lovely daughter home:  
And he will meet thee on the way  
With all his numerous array  
White with their panting palfreys' foam": 510  
And by mine honour! I will say,  
That I repent me of the day  
When I spake words of fierce disdain  
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!—  
—For since that evil hour hath flown,  
Many a summer's sun hath shone;  
Yet ne'er found I a friend again  
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,  
Her face upraised, her eyes o'er flowing; 520  
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,  
His gracious hail on all bestowing;—  
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,  
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;  
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,  
This day my journey should not be,  
So strange a dream hath come to me;  
That I had vowed with music loud

To clear yon wood from thing unblest,  
Warned by a vision in my rest! 530  
For in my sleep I saw that dove,  
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,  
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—  
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,  
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,  
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.  
Which when I saw and when I heard,  
I wonder'd what might ail the bird :  
For nothing near it could I see,  
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the 540  
old tree.

And in my dream, methought, I went  
To search out what might there be found ;  
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,  
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.  
I went and peered, and could descry  
No cause for her distressful cry ;  
But yet for her dear lady's sake  
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,  
When lo ! I saw a bright green snake 550  
Coiled around its wings and neck.  
Green as the herbs on which it couched,  
Close by the dove's its head it crouched ;  
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,  
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers !  
I woke ; it was the midnight hour,  
The clock was echoing in the tower ;  
But though my slumber was gone by,  
This dream it would not pass away—  
It seems to live upon the eye !  
And thence I vowed this self-same day, 560  
With music strong and saintly song  
To wander through the forest bare,  
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said : the Baron, the while,  
Half-listening heard him with a smile ;  
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,  
His eyes made up of wonder and love ;  
And said in courtly accents fine,  
“ Sweet maid, Lord Roland’s beauteous dove,  
With arms more strong than harp or song, 570  
Thy sire and I will crush the snake ! ”  
He kissed her forehead as he spake,  
And Geraldine in maiden wise,  
Casting down her large bright eyes,  
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine  
She turned her from Sir Leoline ;  
Softly gathering up her train,  
That o’er her right arm fell again ;  
And folded her arms across her chest,  
And couched her head upon her breast, 580  
And looked askance at Christabel—  
Jesus, Maria, shield her well !

A snake’s small eye blinks dull and shy,  
And the lady’s eyes they shrunk in her head,  
Each shrunk up to a serpent’s eye,  
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,  
At Christabel she looked askance !  
One moment—and the sight was fled !  
But Christabel in dizzy trance  
Stumbling on the unsteady ground 590  
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound ;  
And Geraldine again turned round,  
And like a thing, that sought relief,  
Full of wonder and full of grief,  
She rolled her large bright eyes divine  
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas ! her thoughts are gone,  
She nothing sees—no sight but one !  
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,

I know not how, in fearful wise  
So deeply had she drunken in  
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,  
That all her features were resigned  
To this sole image in her mind :  
And passively did imitate  
That look of dull and treacherous hate !  
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,  
Still picturing that look askance  
With forced unconscious sympathy  
Full before her father's view—  
As far as such a look could be,  
In eyes so innocent and blue !

600

610

And when the trance was o'er, the maid  
Paused awhile, and inly prayed :  
Then falling at the Baron's feet,  
" By my mother's soul do I entreat  
That thou this woman send away ! "

She said : and more she could not say :  
For what she knew she could not tell,  
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell.

620

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,  
Sir Leoline ? Thy only child  
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,  
So fair, so innocent, so mild ;  
The same, for whom thy lady died !  
O by the pangs of her dear mother  
Think thou no evil of thy child !  
For her, and thee, and for no other,  
She prayed the moment ere she died :  
Prayed that the babe, for whom she died,  
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride !

That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,  
Sir Leoline !  
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,  
Her child and thine ?

630

Within the Baron's heart and brain  
If thoughts like these had any share,  
They only swelled his rage and pain,  
And did but work confusion there.  
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,  
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild, 640  
Dishonour'd thus in his old age ;  
Dishonour'd by his only child,  
And all his hospitality  
To the insulted daughter of his friend  
By more than woman's jealousy  
Brought thus to a disgraceful end—  
He rolled his eye with stern regard  
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,  
And said in tones abrupt, austere—  
“Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here ? 650  
I bade thee hence!” The bard obeyed ;  
And turning from his own sweet maid,  
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,  
Led forth the lady Geraldine !

## THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE SECOND

A little child, a limber elf,  
Singing, dancing to itself,  
A fairy thing with red round cheeks  
That always finds, and never seeks,  
Makes such a vision to the sight  
As fills a father's eyes with light ; 660  
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast  
Upon his heart, that he at last  
Must needs express his love's excess  
With words of unmeant bitterness.  
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together  
Thoughts so all unlike each other ;  
To mutter and mock a broken charm,  
To dally with wrong that does no harm.  
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty



At each wild word to feel within 670  
 A sweet recoil of love and pity.  
 And what, if in a world of sin  
 (O sorrow and shame should this be true!)  
 Such giddiness of heart and brain  
 Comes seldom save from rage and pain,  
 So talks as it's most used to do.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

- 48-52. Notice the grace and delicacy of these lines.  
 66. *frightful*: Into the vague atmosphere that all is not well this word is vividly thrust.  
 92. *I wis* or *ywis*: certainly.  
 152. *scritch*: screech.  
 153. The repetition sustains the feeling of uneasy expectancy.  
 162. *boss*: The raised central part of the outside of a shield.  
 178. *so curiously*: with such exquisite skill. Contrast the vague atmosphere of these lines with the description of Madeline's room in "The Eve of St. Agnes," p. 143.  
 205. *Peak and pine*: emaciated and wasting away.  
 217. *wildered*: an aphetic form of bewildered.  
 239. *weal*: happiness.  
 253. Coleridge keeps the reader in a hushed awe of expectation.  
 258. *assay*: attempt.  
 288. *bale*: evil or harm.  
 306. *tairn* or *tarn*: mountain lake.  
 310. *fell*: hill or mountain.  
 339. *sacristan*: sexton.  
 359. Critics have held the opinion that localizing the scene of these supernatural happenings takes much from the intended effects of vagueness and the awed expectancy of the liberation of powerful, unseen forces of evil.  
 408-413. Coleridge considered that these lines on broken friendship were the "best and sweetest" that he had ever written.  
 442. *reptile*: A grimly significant piece of irony in view of the presence of Geraldine.  
 591. Contrast Coleridge's treatment of the serpent *motif* with the more direct methods of Keats in "Lamia."  
 676. Such was the subtlety of the original conception of the poem that Coleridge confessed that he was unable to complete it.

## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

## I

My hair is grey, but not with years,  
Nor grew it white  
In a single night,  
As men's have grown from sudden fears :  
My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,  
But rusted with a vile repose,  
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,  
And mine has been the fate of those  
To whom the goodly earth and air  
Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare :  
But this was for my father's faith  
I suffer'd chains and courted death ;  
That father perish'd at the stake  
For tenets he would not forsake ;  
And for the same his lineal race  
In darkness found a dwelling-place ;  
We were seven—who now are one,  
Six in youth, and one in age,  
Finish'd as they had begun,  
Proud of Persecution's rage ;  
One in fire, and two in field,  
Their belief with blood have seal'd,  
Dying as their father died,  
For the God their foes denied ;  
Three were in a dungeon cast,  
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

10

20

## II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,  
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,  
There are seven columns, massy and grey,  
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,  
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,  
And through the crevice and the cleft

30

Of the thick wall is fallen and left;  
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,  
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:  
And in each pillar there is a ring,  
And in each ring there is a chain;  
That iron is a cankering thing,

For in these limbs its teeth remain,  
With marks that will not wear away,  
Till I have done with this new day,  
Which now is painful to these eyes,  
Which have not seen the sun so rise  
For years—I cannot count them o'er,  
I lost their long and heavy score,  
When my last brother droop'd and died,  
And I lay living by his side.

40

## III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,  
And we were three—yet, each alone;  
We could not move a single pace,  
We could not see each other's face,  
But with that pale and livid light  
That made us strangers in our sight:  
And thus together—yet apart,  
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart,  
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth  
Of the pure elements of earth,  
To hearken to each other's speech,  
And each turn comforter to each  
With some new hope, or legend old,  
Or song heroically bold;  
But even these at length grew cold.  
Our voices took a dreary tone,  
An echo of the dungeon stone,  
A grating sound, not full and free,  
As they of yore were wont to be:  
It might be fancy, but to me  
They never sounded like our own.

50

60

## IV

I was the eldest of the three,  
And to uphold and cheer the rest  
I ought to do—and did my best—  
And each did well in his degree.  
The youngest, whom my father loved,  
Because our mother's brow was given  
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven—  
For him my soul was sorely moved;  
And truly might it be distress'd  
To see such bird in such a nest;  
For he was beautiful as day—  
(When day was beautiful to me  
As to young eagles, being free)—  
A polar day, which will not see  
A sunset till its summer's gone,  
Its sleepless summer of long light,  
The snow-clad offspring of the sun :  
And thus he was as pure and bright,  
And in his natural spirit gay,  
With tears for nought but others' ills,  
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,  
Unless he could assuage the woe  
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

## V

The other was as pure of mind,  
But form'd to combat with his kind;  
Strong in his frame, and of a mood  
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,  
And perish'd in the foremost rank  
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:  
His spirit wither'd with their clank,  
I saw it silently decline—  
And so perchance in sooth did mine:  
But yet I forced it on to cheer  
Those relics of a home so dear.  
He was a hunter of the hills,

Had follow'd there the deer and wolf ;  
 To him his dungeon was a gulf,  
 And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

## VI

Lake Lemán lies by Chillon's walls :  
 A thousand feet in depth below  
 Its massy waters meet and flow ;  
 Thus much the fathom-line was sent 110  
 From Chillon's snow-white battlement,  
 Which round about the wave inthrals :  
 A double dungeon wall and wave  
 Have made—and like a living grave.  
 Below the surface of the lake  
 The dark vault lies wherein we lay,  
 We heard it ripple night and day ;  
 Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd ;  
 And I have felt the winter's spray  
 Wash through the bars when winds were high 120  
 And wanton in the happy sky ;  
 And then the very rock hath rock'd,  
 And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,  
 Because I could have smiled to see  
 The death that would have set me free.

## VII

I said my nearer brother pined,  
 I said his mighty heart declined,  
 He loathed and put away his food ;  
 It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,  
 For we were used to hunter's fare, 130  
 And for the like had little care :  
 The milk drawn from the mountain goat  
 Was changed for water from the moat,  
 Our bread was such as captives' tears  
 Have moisten'd many a thousand years,  
 Since man first pent his fellow men  
 Like brutes within an iron den ;

But what were these to us or him ?  
These wasted not his heart or limb ;  
My brother's soul was of that mould 140  
Which in a palace had grown cold,  
Had his free breathing been denied  
The range of the steep mountain's side ;  
But why delay the truth ?—he died.  
I saw, and could not hold his head,  
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—  
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,  
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.  
He died, and they unlock'd his chain,  
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave 150  
Even from the cold earth of our cave.  
I begg'd them as a boon to lay  
His corse in dust whereon the day  
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,  
But then within my brain it wrought,  
That even in death his freeborn breast  
In such a dungeon could not rest.  
I might have spared my idle prayer—  
They coldly laugh'd, and laid him there :  
The flat and turfless earth above 160  
The being we so much did love ;  
His empty chain above it leant, -  
Such murder's fitting monument !

## VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,  
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,  
His mother's image in fair face,  
The infant love of all his race,  
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,  
My latest care, for whom I sought  
To hoard my life, that his might be 170  
Less wretched now, and one day free ;  
He, too, who yet had held untired  
A spirit natural or inspired—

He, too, was struck, and day by day  
Was wither'd on the stalk away.  
Oh, God ! it is a fearful thing  
To see the human soul take wing  
In any shape, in any mood :  
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,  
I've seen it on the breaking ocean 180  
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,  
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed  
Of Sin delirious with its dread ;  
But these were horrors—this was woe  
Unmix'd with such—but sure and slow :  
He faded, and so calm and meek,  
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,  
So tearless, yet so tender, kind,  
And grieved for those he left behind ;  
With all the while a cheek whose bloom 190  
Was as a mockery of the tomb,  
Whose tints as gently sunk away  
As a departing rainbow's ray ;  
An eye of most transparent light,  
That almost made the dungeon bright,  
And not a word of murmur, not  
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—  
A little talk of better days,  
A little hope my own to raise,  
For I was sunk in silence—lost 200  
In this last loss, of all the most ;  
And then the sighs he would suppress  
Of fainting nature's feebleness,  
More slowly drawn, grew less and less.  
I listen'd, but I could not hear ;  
I call'd, for I was wild with fear ;  
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread  
Would not be thus admonish'd ;  
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound,  
I burst my chain with one strong bound, 210  
And rush'd to him :—I found him not,

I only stirr'd in this black spot,  
I only lived, I only drew  
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew ;  
The last, the sole, the dearest link  
Between me and the eternal brink.  
Which bound me to my failing race,  
Was broken in the fatal place.  
One on the earth, and one beneath—  
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe: 220  
I took that hand which lay so still,  
Alas ! my own was full as chill :  
I had not strength to stir, or strive,  
But felt that I was still alive—  
A frantic feeling, when we know  
That what we love shall ne'er be so.  
I know not why  
I could not die,  
I had no earthly hope but faith,  
And that forbade a selfish death. 230

## IX

What next befell me then and there  
I know not well—I never knew—  
First came the loss of light, and air,  
And then of darkness too :  
I had no thought, no feeling—none—  
Among the stones I stood a stone,  
And was scarce conscious what I wist,  
As shrubless crags within the mist ;  
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey ;  
It was not night, it was not day ; 240  
It was not even the dungeon-light,  
So hateful to my heavy sight,  
But vacancy absorbing space,  
And fixedness without a place ;  
There were no stars, no earth, no time,  
No check, no change, no good, no crime,  
But silence, and a stirless breath



Which neither was of life nor death ;  
A sea of stagnant idleness,  
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless ! 250

## X

A light broke in upon my brain,—  
It was the carol of a bird ;  
It ceased, and then it came again,  
The sweetest song ear ever heard,  
And mine was thankful till my eyes  
Ran over with the glad surprise,  
And they that moment could not see  
I was the mate of misery ;  
But then by dull degrees came back  
My senses to their wonted track ; 260  
I saw the dungeon walls and floor  
Close slowly round me as before,  
I saw the glimmer of the sun  
Creeping as it before had done,  
But through the crevice where it came  
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,  
And tamer than upon the tree ;  
A lovely bird, with azure wings,  
And song that said a thousand things,  
And seem'd to say them all for me ! 270  
I never saw its like before,  
I ne'er shall see its likeness more :  
It seem'd like me to want a mate,  
But was not half so desolate,  
And it was come to love me when  
None lived to love me so again,  
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,  
Had brought me back to feel and think.  
I know not if it late were free,  
Or broke its cage to perch on mine, 280  
But knowing well captivity,  
Sweet bird ! I could not wish for thine !  
Or if it were, in winged guise,

A visitant from Paradise;  
For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while  
Which made me both to weep and smile—  
I sometimes deem'd that it might be  
My brother's soul come down to me;  
But then at last away it flew,  
And then 'twas mortal well I knew,  
For he would never thus have flown,  
And left me twice so doubly lone,  
Lone as the corse within its shroud,  
Lone as a solitary cloud,—

290

A single cloud on a sunny day,  
While all the rest of heaven is clear,  
A frown upon the atmosphere,  
That hath no business to appear  
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

## XI

A kind of change came in my fate,  
My keepers grew compassionate;  
I know not what had made them so,  
They were inured to sights of woe,  
But so it was:—my broken chain  
With links unfasten'd did remain,  
And it was liberty to stride  
Along my cell from side to side,  
And up and down, and then athwart,  
And tread it over every part;  
And round the pillars one by one,  
Returning where my walk begun,  
Avoiding only, as I trod,  
My brothers' graves without a sod;  
For if I thought with heedless tread  
My step profaned their lowly bed,  
My breath came gaspingly and thick,  
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

300

310

## XII

I made a footing in the wall,  
It was not therefrom to escape,  
For I had buried one and all 320  
Who loved me in a human shape;  
And the whole earth would henceforth be  
A wider prison unto me :  
No child, no sire, no kin had I,  
No partner in my misery;  
I thought of this, and I was glad,  
For thought of them had made me mad;  
But I was curious to ascend  
To my barr'd windows, and to bend  
Once more, upon the mountains high, 330  
The quiet of a loving eye.

## XIII

I saw them, and they were the same,  
They were not changed like me in frame;  
I saw their thousand years of snow  
On high—their wide long lake below,  
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;  
I heard the torrents leap and gush  
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;  
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,  
And whiter sails go skimming down; 340  
And then there was a little isle,  
Which in my very face did smile,  
The only one in view;  
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,  
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,  
But in it there were three tall trees,  
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,  
And by it there were waters flowing,  
And on it there were young flowers growing,  
Of gentle breath and hue. 350  
The fish swam by the castle wall,  
And they seem'd joyous each and all;

The eagle rode the rising blast,  
 Methought he never flew so fast  
 As then to me he seem'd to fly;  
 And then new tears came in my eye,  
 And I felt troubled—and would fain  
 I had not left my recent chain;  
 And when I did descend again,  
 The darkness of my dim abode  
 Fell on me as a heavy load;  
 It was as is a new-dug grave,  
 Closing o'er one we sought to save,—  
 And yet my glance, too much oppress'd,  
 Had almost need of such a rest.

360

## XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,  
 I kept no count, I took no note,  
 I had no hope my eyes to raise,  
 And clear them of their dreary mote;  
 At last men came to set me free;  
 I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where;  
 It was at length the same to me,  
 Fetter'd or fetterless to be,  
 I learn'd to love despair.  
 And thus when they appear'd at last,  
 And all my bonds aside were cast,  
 These heavy walls to me had grown  
 A hermitage—and all my own!  
 And half I felt as they were come  
 To tear me from a second home:  
 With spiders I had friendship made,  
 And watch'd them in their sullen trade,  
 Had seen the mice by moonlight play,  
 And why should I feel less than they?  
 We were all inmates of one place,  
 And I, the monarch of each race,  
 Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!  
 In quiet we had learn'd to dwell;

370

380

My very chains and I grew friends,  
 So much a long communion tends  
 To make us what we are:—even I  
 Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

390

LORD BYRON

237. *wist*: knew.

244. *fixedness without a place*: oxymoron. His feelings had become so benumbed that, although his body was still fixed to the scene of the tragedies, his mind failed to realise fully where he was.

284. *visitant*: The word is often applied to a supernatural visitor. It is also used with the meaning of a migratory bird which frequents a particular spot. The word is suitable here in both senses.

374. *I learn'd to love despair*: he feels regret at leaving familiar scenes. His long imprisonment made him shrink at having to adjust himself to new surroundings, so that it is as if he is begging not to have to make the effort. He clings weakly to the despair that had sapped his vitality and made him unable to appreciate freedom.

384. *And why should I feel less than they*: His feelings had been dulled down to those of spiders or mice, creatures that lurk in dark corners in preference to the light of day.

## HYPERION

### *A Fragment*

#### BOOK I

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale  
 Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,  
 Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,  
 Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,  
 Still as the silence round about his lair;  
 Forest on forest hung about his head  
 Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,

Not so much life as on a summer's day  
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,  
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest. 10  
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more  
By reason of his fallen divinity  
Spreading a shade : the Naiad 'mid her reeds  
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,  
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,  
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground  
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,  
Unscptred ; and his realmless eyes were closed ;  
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth, 20  
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place ;  
But there came one, who with a kindred hand  
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low  
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.  
She was a Goddess of the infant world ;  
By her in stature the tall Amazon  
Had stood a pigmy's height : she would have ta'en  
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck ;  
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel. 30  
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,  
Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,  
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.  
But oh ! how unlike marble was that face :  
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made  
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.  
There was a listening fear in her regard,  
As if calamity had but begun ;  
As if the vanward clouds of evil days  
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear 40  
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.  
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot  
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,

Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain :  
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck  
 She laid, and to the level of his ear  
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake  
 In solemn tenour and deep organ tone :  
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue  
 Would come in these like accents : O how frail 50  
 To that large utterance of the early Gods !  
 " Saturn, look up !—though wherefore, poor old King ?  
 I have no comfort for thee, no not one :  
 I cannot say, ' O wherefore sleepest thou ? '  
 For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth  
 Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God !  
 And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,  
 Has from thy sceptre pass'd ; and all the air  
 Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.  
 Thy thunder, conscious of the new command, 60  
 Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;  
 And thy sharp lightning in unpractis'd hands  
 Scorches and burns our once serene domain.  
 O aching time ! O moments big as years !  
 All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,  
 And press it so upon our weary griefs  
 That unbelief has not a space to breathe.  
 Saturn, sleep on :—O thoughtless, why did I  
 Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ?  
 Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes ? 70  
 Saturn, sleep on ! while at thy feet I weep. "

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,  
 Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,  
 Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,  
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,  
 Save from one gradual solitary gust  
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,  
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave ;  
 So came these words and went ; and while in tears  
 She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground, 80

Just where her falling hair might be outspread  
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.  
One moon, with alteration slow, had shed  
Her silver seasons four upon the night,  
And still these two were postured motionless,  
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;  
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet :  
Until at length old Saturn lifted up  
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,  
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place, 90  
And that fair kneeling Goddess ; and then spake,  
As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard  
Shook horrid with such aspen-malady :  
" O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,  
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face ;  
Look up, and let me see our doom in it ;  
Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape  
Is Saturn's ; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice  
Of Saturn ; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,  
Naked and bare of its great diadem, 100  
Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power  
To make me desolate ? whence came the strength ?  
How was it nurtur'd to such bursting forth,  
While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp ?  
But it is so ; and I am smother'd up,  
And buried from all godlike exercise  
Of influence benign on planets pale,  
Of admonitions to the winds and seas,  
Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,  
And all those acts which Deity supreme, 110  
Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone  
Away from my own bosom : I have left  
My strong identity, my real self,  
Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit  
Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search !  
Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round  
Upon all space : space starr'd, and lorn of light ;  
Space region'd with life-air ; and barren void ;



Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.—  
 Search, Thea, search ! and tell me, if thou seest      120  
 A certain shape or shadow, making way  
 With wings of chariot fierce to repossess  
 A heaven he lost erewhile : it must—it must  
 Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King.  
 Yes, there must be a golden victory ;  
 There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown  
 Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival  
 Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,  
 Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir  
 Of strings in hollow shells ; and there shall be      130  
 Beautiful things made new, for the surprise  
 Of the sky-children ; I will give command :  
 Thea ! Thea ! Thea ! where is Saturn ? ”

This passion lifted him upon his feet,  
 And made his hands to struggle in the air,  
 His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,  
 His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.  
 He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep ;  
 A little time, and then again he snatch'd  
 Utterance thus.—“ But cannot I create ?      140  
 Cannot I form ? Cannot I fashion forth  
 Another world, another universe,  
 To overbear and crumble this to naught ?  
 Where is another chaos ? Where ? ”—That word  
 Found way unto Olympus, and make quake  
 The rebel three.—Thea was startled up,  
 And in her bearing was a sort of hope,  
 As thus she quick-voic'd spake, yet full of awe.

“ This cheers our fallen house : come to our friends,  
 O Saturn ! come away, and give them heart ;      150  
 I know the covert, for thence came I hither.”  
 Thus brief ; then with beseeching eyes she went  
 With backward footing through the shade a space :  
 He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way

Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist  
Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,  
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,  
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe :  
The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound, 160  
Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,  
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.  
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept  
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty ;—  
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire  
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up  
From man to the sun's God : yet unsecure :  
For as among us mortals omens drear  
Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he—  
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech, 170  
Or the familiar visiting of one  
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,  
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp ;  
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,  
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright  
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,  
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,  
Glar'd a blood-red through all its thousand courts,  
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ;  
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds 180  
Flush'd angrily : while sometimes eagles' wings,  
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,  
Darken'd the place ; and neighing steeds were heard,  
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.  
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths  
Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,  
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took  
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick :  
And so when harbour'd in the sleepy west,  
After the full completion of fair day,— 190  
For rest divine upon exalted couch

And slumber in the arms of melody,  
 He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease  
 With stride colossal, on from hall to hall ;  
 While far within each aisle and deep recess,  
 His winged minions in close clusters stood,  
 Amaz'd and full of fear ; like anxious men  
 Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,  
 When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.  
 Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance, 200  
 Went step for step with Thea through the woods,  
 Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,  
 Came slope upon the threshold of the west ;  
 Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope  
 In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,  
 Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet  
 And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies ;  
 And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,  
 In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,  
 That inlet to severe magnificence 210  
 Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath ;  
 His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,  
 And gave a roar, as if of earthy fire,  
 That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours  
 And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,  
 From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,  
 Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,  
 And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,  
 Until he reach'd the great main cupola; 220  
 There standing fierce beneath, he stamped his foot,  
 And from the basements deep to the high towers  
 Jarr'd his own golden region; and before  
 The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd,  
 His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,  
 To this result : " O dreams of day and night !  
 O monstrous forms ! O effigies of pain !  
 O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom !

O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools !  
 Why do I know ye ? why have I seen ye ? why 230  
 Is my eternal essence thus distraught  
 To see and to behold these horrors new ?  
 Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall ?  
 Am I to leave this haven of my rest,  
 This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,  
 This calm luxuriance of blissful light,  
 These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,  
 Of all my lucent empire ? It is left  
 Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.  
 The blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry, 240  
 I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.  
 Even here, into my centre of repose,  
 The shady visions come to domineer,  
 Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.  
 Fall !—No, by Tellus and her briny robes !  
 Over the fiery frontier of my realms  
 I will advance a terrible right arm,  
 Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,  
 And bid old Saturn take his throne again.”  
 He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat 250  
 Held struggle with his throat but came not forth ;  
 For as in theatres of crowded men  
 Hubbub increases more they call out “ Hush ! ”  
 So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale  
 Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold ;  
 And from the mirror'd level where he stood  
 A mist arose, as from a stummy marsh.  
 At this, through all his bulk an agony  
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,  
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular 260  
 Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd  
 From over-strained might. Releas'd, he fled  
 To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours  
 Before the dawn in season due should blush,  
 He breath'd fierce breath against the sleepy portals,  
 Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide

Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.  
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode  
Each day from east to west the heavens through,  
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds ; 270  
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,  
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,  
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,  
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark  
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep  
Up to the zenith—hieroglyphics old  
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers  
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought  
Won from the gaze of many centuries :  
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge 280  
Of stone, or marble swart ; their import gone,  
Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings this orb  
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,  
Ever exalted at the God's approach :  
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense  
Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were ;  
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,  
Awaiting for Hyperion's command. †  
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne  
And bid the day begin, if but for change. 290  
He might not:—No, though a primeval God :  
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.  
Therefore the operations of the dawn  
Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told.  
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,  
Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide  
Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night ;  
And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,  
Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent  
His spirit to the sorrow of the time ; 300  
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,  
Upon the boundaries of day and night,  
He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.  
There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars

Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice  
 Of Coelus, from the universal space,  
 Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear.  
 " O brightest of my children dear, earth-born  
 And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries  
 All unrevealed even to the powers 310  
 Which met at thy creating; at whose joys  
 And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,  
 I Coelus, wonder, how they came and whence;  
 And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,  
 Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,  
 Manifestations of that beauteous life  
 Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space :  
 Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child !  
 Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses !  
 There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion 320  
 Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,  
 I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne !  
 To me his arms were spread, to me his voice  
 Found way from forth the thunders round his head !  
 Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.  
 Art thou, too, near such doom? Vague fear there is:  
 For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.  
 Divine ye were created, and divine  
 In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,  
 Unruffled, like high Gods, ye liv'd and ruled : 330  
 Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath;  
 Actions of rage and passion; even as  
 I see them, on the mortal world beneath,  
 In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son !  
 Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall !  
 Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,  
 As thou canst move about, an evident God;  
 And canst oppose to each malignant hour  
 Ethereal presence :—I am but a voice;  
 My life is but the life of winds and tides, 340  
 No more than winds and tides can I avail :—  
 But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van

Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb  
 Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth!  
 For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.  
 Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,  
 And of thy seasons be a careful nurse."—  
 Ere half this region-whisper had come down,  
 Hyperion arose, and on the stars  
 Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide 350  
 Until it ceas'd; and still he kept them wide:  
 And still they were the same bright, patient stars.  
 Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,  
 Like to a diver in the pearly seas,  
 Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,  
 And plung'd all noiseless into the deep night.

## BOOK II

Just at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings  
 Hyperion slid into the rustled air,  
 And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place  
 Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.  
 It was a den where no insulting light  
 Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans  
 They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar  
 Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,  
 Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.  
 Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd 10  
 Ever as if just rising from a sleep,  
 Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;  
 And thus in thousand hugest phantasies  
 Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.  
 Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,  
 Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge  
 Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled:  
 Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.  
 Cæus, and Gyges, and Briareus,  
 Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon, 20  
 With many more, the brawniest in assault,

Were pent in regions of laborious breath;  
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep  
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs  
Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp'd and screw'd;  
Without a motion, save of their big hearts  
Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd  
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.  
Mnemosyne was straying in the world;  
Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered; 30  
And many else were free to roam abroad,  
But for the main, here found they covert drear.  
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,  
Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque  
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,  
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,  
In dull November, and their chancel vault,  
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.  
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave  
Or word, or look, or action of despair. 40  
Creus was one; his ponderous iron mace  
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock  
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.  
Iapetus another; in his grasp,  
A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue  
Squeez'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length  
Dead; and because the creature could not spit  
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.  
Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,  
As though in pain; for still upon the flint 50  
He ground severe his skull, with open mouth  
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him  
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,  
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,  
Though feminine, than any of her sons:  
More thought than woe was in her dusky face,  
For she was prophesying of her glory;  
And in her wide imagination stood  
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,



By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles. 60  
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,  
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk  
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.  
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelf,  
Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else,  
Shadow'd Enceladus; once tame and mild  
As grazing ox unworried in the meads;  
Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,  
He meditated, plotted, and even now  
Was hurling mountains in that second war, 70  
Not long delay'd, that scar'd the younger Gods  
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.  
Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone  
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close  
Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap  
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.  
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet  
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight;  
No shape distinguishable, more than when  
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the 80  
clouds:  
And many else whose names may not be told.  
For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,  
Who shall delay her flight? And she must chaunt  
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd  
With damp and slippery footing from a depth  
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff  
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew  
Till on the level height their steps found ease:  
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms  
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain, 90  
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face:  
There saw the direst strife; the supreme God  
At war with all the frailty of grief,  
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,  
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.  
Against these plagues he strove in vain; for Fate

Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,  
A disanointing poison : so that Thea,  
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass  
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

100

As with us mortal men, the laden heart  
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,  
When it is nighing to the mournful house  
Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise ;  
So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,  
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,  
But that he met Enceladus's eye,  
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once  
Came like an inspiration ; and he shouted,  
“ Titans, behold your God ! ” at which some  
groan'd ;

110

Some started on their feet ; some also shouted ;  
Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence ;  
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,  
Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,  
Her eye-brows thin and jet, and hollow eyes.  
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines  
When Winter lifts his voice ; there is a noise  
Among immortals when a God gives sign,  
With hushing finger, how he means to load  
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought, 120  
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp :  
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines :  
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,  
No other sound succeeds ; but ceasing here,  
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom  
Grew up like organ, that begins anew  
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,  
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.  
Thus grew it up—“ Not in my own sad breast,  
Which is its own great judge and searcher out,  
Can I find reason why ye should be thus :  
Not in the legends of the first of days,

130

Studied from that old spirit-leaved book  
 Which starry Uranus with finger bright  
 Sav'd from the shores of darkness, when the waves  
 Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom ;—  
 And the which book ye know I ever kept  
 For my firm-based footstool :—Ah, infirm !  
 Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent  
 Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,— 14c  
 At war, at peace, or inter-quarrelling  
 One against one, or two, or three, or all  
 Each several one against the other three,  
 As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods,  
 Drown both, and press them both against earth's face,  
 Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath  
 Unhinges the poor world ;—not in that strife,  
 Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,  
 Can I find reason why ye should be thus :  
 No, nowhere can unriddle, though I search, 15c  
 And pore on Nature's universal scroll  
 Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,  
 The first-born of all shap'd and palpable Gods,  
 Should cower beneath what, in comparison,  
 Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,  
 O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here !  
 O Titans, shall I say, ' Arise ! '—Ye groan :  
 Shall I say ' Crouch ! '—Ye groan. What can I then ?  
 O Heaven wide ! O unseen parent dear !  
 What can I ? Tell me, all ye brethren-Gods, 16c  
 How we can war, how engine our great wrath !  
 O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear  
 Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,  
 Ponderest high and deep ; and in thy face  
 I see, astonied, that severe content  
 Which comes of thought and musing : give us help ! ”

So ended Saturn ; and the God of the Sea,  
 Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,  
 But cogitation in his watery shades,

Arose, with locks not oozy, and began, 170  
In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue  
Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.  
“ O ye, whom wrath consumes ! who, passion-stung,  
Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies !  
Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,  
My voice is not a bellows unto ire.  
Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof  
How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop :  
And in the proof much comfort will I give,  
If ye will take that comfort in its truth. 180  
We fall by course of Nature’s law, not force  
Of Thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou  
Has sifted well the atom-universe ;  
But for this reason, that thou art King,  
And only blind from sheer supremacy,  
One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,  
Through which I wandered to eternal truth.  
And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,  
So art thou not the last ; it cannot be ;  
Thou art not the beginning nor the end. 190  
From chaos and parental darkness came  
Light, the first fruits of that intense broil,  
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends  
Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,  
And with it light, and light, engendering  
Upon its own producer, forthwith touch’d  
The whole enormous matter into life.  
Upon that very hour, our parentage,  
The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest ;  
Then thou first born, and we the giant race, 200  
Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.  
Now comes the pain of truth, to whom ’tis pain ;  
O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,  
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,  
That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well !  
As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far  
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs ;

And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth  
In form and shape compact and beautiful,  
In will, in action free, companionship 210  
And thousand other signs of purer life ;  
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,  
A power more strong in beauty, born of us  
And fated to excel us, as we pass  
In glory that old Darkness : nor are we  
Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule  
Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil  
Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,  
And feedeth still, more comely than itself ?  
Can it deny the chieftdom of green groves ? 220  
Or shall the tree be envious of the dove  
Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings  
To wander wherewithal and find its joys ?  
We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs  
Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,  
But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower  
Above us in their beauty, and must reign  
In right thereof ; for 'tis the eternal law  
That first in beauty should be first in might :  
Yea, by that law, another race may drive 230  
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.  
Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,  
My dispossessor ? Have ye seen his face ?  
Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along  
By noble winged creatures he hath made ?  
I saw him on the calmed waters scud,  
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,  
That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell  
To all my empire : farewell sad I took,  
And hither came, to see how dolorous fate 240  
Had wrought upon ye ; and how I might best  
Give consolation in this woe extreme.  
Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

Whether through pozed conviction, or disdain,

They guarded silence, when Oceanus  
Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell?  
But so it was, none answer'd for a space,  
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene;  
And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd  
Thus wording timidly among the fierce: 250  
" O Father, I am here the simplest voice,  
And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,  
And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,  
There to remain for ever, as I fear:  
I would not bode of evil, if I thought  
So weak a creature could turn off the help  
Which by just right should come of mighty Gods:  
Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell  
Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,  
And know that we had parted from all hope. 260  
I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,  
Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land  
Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.  
Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;  
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;  
So that I felt a movement in my heart  
To chide, and to reproach that solitude  
With songs of misery, music of our woes;  
And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell  
And murmur'd into it, and made melody— 270  
O melody no more! for while I sang,  
And with poor skill let pass into the breeze  
The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand  
Just opposite, an island of the sea,  
There came enchantment with the shifting wind,  
That did both drown and keep alive my ears.  
I threw my shell away upon the sand,  
And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd  
With that new blissful golden melody.  
A living death was in each gush of sounds, 280  
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,  
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,

Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string;  
 And then another, then another strain,  
 Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,  
 With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,  
 To hover round my head, and make me sick  
 Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,  
 And I was stopping up my frantic ears,  
 When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands, 290  
 A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,  
 And still it cried 'Apollo! young Apollo!  
 The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!  
 I fled, it follow'd me, and cried 'Apollo!  
 O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt  
 Those pains of mine; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,  
 Ye would not call this too indulged tongue  
 Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard."

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook  
 That, lingering along a pebbled coast, 300  
 Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,  
 And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice  
 Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:  
 The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves  
 In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,  
 Came booming thus, while still upon his arm  
 He lean'd; not rising, from supreme contempt.  
 "Or shall we listen to the over-wise,  
 Or to the over-foolish, Giant-Gods?  
 Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all 310  
 That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,  
 Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,  
 Could agonize me more than baby-words  
 In midst of this dethronement horrible.  
 Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all,  
 Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?  
 Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?  
 Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,  
 Thy scalding in the Seas? What, have I rous'd

Your spleens with so few simple words as these? 320  
O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:  
O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes  
Wide-glaring for revenge!"—As this he said,  
He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,  
Still without intermission speaking thus :  
" Now, ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,  
And purge the ether of our enemies;  
How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,  
And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,  
Stifling that puny essence in its tent. 330  
O let him feel the evil he hath done;  
For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,  
Much pain have I for more than loss of realms:  
The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled;  
Those days, all innocent of scathing war,  
When all the fair Existences of heaven  
Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak:—  
That was before our brows were taught to frown,  
Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds;  
That was before we knew the winged thing, 340  
Victory, might be lost, or might be won.  
And be ye mindful that Hyperion,  
Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—  
Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here!"

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,  
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name  
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,  
A pallid gleam across his features stern:  
Not savage, for he saw full many a God  
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all, 350  
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,  
But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks  
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel  
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.  
In pale and silver silence they remain'd,  
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,



Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,  
All the said spaces of oblivion,  
And every gulf, and every chasm old,  
And every height, and every sullen depth, 360  
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams;  
And all the everlasting cataracts,  
And all the headlong torrents far and near,  
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,  
Nor saw the light and made it terrible.  
It was Hyperion:—a granite peak  
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view  
The misery his brilliance had betray'd  
To the most hateful seeing of itself.  
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl, 370  
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade  
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk  
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun  
To one who travels from the dusking East:  
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp  
He utter'd, while his hands contemplative  
He press'd together, and in silence stood.  
Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods  
At sight of the dejected King of Day,  
And many hid their faces from the light: 380  
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes  
Among the brotherhood; and, at their glare,  
Uprose Iapetus, and Creus too,  
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode  
To where he towered on his eminence.  
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name;  
Hyperion from the peak loud answered, " Saturn! "  
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,  
In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods  
Gave from their hollow throats the name of 390  
" Saturn! "

## BOOK III

Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace,  
Amazed were those Titans utterly.  
O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes;  
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:  
A solitary sorrow best befits  
Thy lips, and antheing a lonely grief.  
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find  
Many a fallen old Divinity  
Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.  
Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp, 10  
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe  
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;  
For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse.  
Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,  
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,  
And let the clouds of even and of morn  
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;  
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,  
Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,  
On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn 20  
Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid  
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd.  
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,  
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,  
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,  
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,  
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade:  
Apollo is once more the golden theme!  
Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun  
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers? 30  
Together had he left his mother fair  
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,  
And in the morning twilight wandered forth  
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,  
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.  
The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars

Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush  
Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle  
There was no covert, no retired cave  
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves, 40  
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.  
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears  
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.  
Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,  
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by  
With solemn step an awful Goddess came,  
And there was purport in her looks for him,  
Which he with eager guess began to read  
Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said :  
" How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea ? 50  
Or hath that antique mien and robed form  
Mov'd in these vales invisible till now ?  
Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er  
The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone  
In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced  
The rustle of those ample skirts about  
These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers  
Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.  
Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before.  
And their eternal calm, and all that face, 60  
Or I have dream'd." — " Yes," said the supreme shape,  
" Thou hast dream'd of me ; and awaking up  
Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,  
Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast  
Unwearied ear of the whole universe  
Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth  
Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange  
That thou shouldst weep, so gifted ? Tell me, youth,  
What sorrow thou canst feel ; for I am sad  
When thou dost shed a tear : explain thy griefs 70  
To one who in this lonely isle hath been  
The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,  
From the young day when first thy infant hand  
Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm

Could bend that bow heroic to all times.  
Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power  
Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones  
For prophecies of thee, and for the sake  
Of loveliness new born."—Apollo then,  
With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes, 80  
Thus answer'd, while his white, melodious throat  
Throbb'd with the syllables.—" Mnemosyne !  
Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how ;  
Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest ?  
Why should I strive to show what from thy lips  
Would come no mystery ? For me, dark, dark,  
And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes :  
I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,  
Until a melancholy numbs my limbs ;  
And then upon the grass I sit, and moan, 90  
Like one who once had wings.—O why should I  
Feel curs'd and thwarted, when the liegeless air  
Yields to my step aspirant ? why should I  
Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet ?  
Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing :  
Are there not other regions than this isle ?  
What are the stars ? There is the sun, the sun !  
And the most patient brilliance of the moon !  
And stars by thousands ! Point me out the way  
To any one particular beauteous star, 100  
And I will flit into it with my lyre.  
And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.  
I have heard the cloudy thunder : Where is power ?  
Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity  
Makes this alarum in the elements,  
While I here idle listen on the shores  
In fearless yet in aching ignorance ?  
O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,  
That waileth every morn and eventide,  
Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves ! 110  
Mute thou remainest—mute ! yet I can read  
A wondrous lesson in thy silent face :

Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.  
 Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,  
 Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,  
 Creations and destroyings, all at once  
 Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,  
 And deify me, as if some blithe wine  
 Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,  
 And so become immortal."—Thus the God, 120  
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance  
 Beneath his white soft temples, stedfast kept  
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.  
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush  
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs;  
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death;  
 Or liker still to one who should take leave  
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang  
 As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse  
 Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd: 130  
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed  
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.  
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld  
 Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length  
 Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his limbs  
 Celestial . . . . .

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30. *Ixion's wheel*: Ixion, King of Thessaly, was bound to an ever-revolving wheel in Hades for an insult to Juno.  
 31. *Memphian sphinx*: a huge stone figure, the upper part of whose body resembled a human being, and the lower part a lion. Memphis is on the left bank of the Nile, and about ten miles from the pyramids.  
 62. *unpractis'd hands*: those of Jupiter, who had just assumed command of the thunderbolt.  
 79-87. Notice the statuesque beauty of this description.  
 94. *Hyperion*: son of Uranus (Heaven) and Gé (Earth). He was the original sun god and was reputed to be of more glorious beauty than his successor, Apollo.  
 104. *nervous*: powerful.  
 115-123. These lines have a Miltonic sonority.

- 126-133. There is pathos in this gleam of past power.  
 128. *metropolitan* : chief, highest, most prominent. (Literally, "pertaining to the chief city.")  
 137. *to fever out* : to stare as in fever.  
 145. *Olympus* : the abode of the Greek gods.  
 146. *The rebel three* : Zeus, Poseidon, Pluto. (Latin names : Jupiter, Neptune, Dis.)  
 195-203. These lines are reminiscent of "Paradise Lost," Book II, ll. 417-423.  
 233-241. Was Keats thinking of his own fate?  
 245. *her briny robes* : the sea.  
 273. *colure* : both of two great circles which intersect each other at right angles at the poles. Their lower part is always below the horizon.  
 306. *Coelus* : another name for Uranus of Heaven.  
 316-317. Keats often speaks of beauty diffused into different forms. His belief in the permanence of beauty is manifest in his "Ode on a Grecian Urn."  
 15-17. Notice the harsh sound of these lines.  
 34-38. Notice this sustained simile, and compare it with Book I, ll. 72-79.  
 44-48. A grim picture of active hatred and a contrast to Saturn's mood.  
 98. *A disanointing poison* : a poison which deprived him of his god-like supremacy.  
 163. *a-hunger'd* : literally, "thoroughly hungry" or starving. Cf. St. Matthew iv. 2 in the Authorized Version.  
 180-182. 'The old order changeth.' The Titans feel the inevitability of change.  
 244. *pozed* : certain, unanswerable.  
 370. *Numidian curl* : small curls close to the head like those of the people of North Africa.  
 373. *Mernnon* : King of Ethiopia, son of Aurora, slain in the Trojan War. A statue erected to his honour was said to give forth a musical note at sunrise.  
 10. *the Delphic harp* : The oracle at Delphi was sacred to Apollo the god of music.  
 12. *Dorian flute* : The three chief modes of Greek music were Lydian, expressive of voluptuous feeling ; Phrygian, inspiring the fury of battle ; and Dorian, inspiring martial courage.  
 24. *Delos* : the birthplace of Apollo.  
 31. *his mother* : Latona. 32. *his twin-sister* : Diana.  
 82. *Mnemosyne* : the mother of the nine Muses. Apollo was their father.

## THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

## I

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was !  
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;  
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,  
And silent was the flock in woolly fold :  
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told  
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense from a censer old,  
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,  
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

## II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ; 10  
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,  
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,  
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees :  
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,  
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails :  
Knights, ladies, praying dumb orat'ries,  
He passeth by ; and his weak spirit fails  
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

## III

Northward he turneth through a little door,  
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue 20  
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor ;  
But no—already had his deathbell rung :  
The joys of all his life were said and sung :  
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve :  
Another way he went, and soon among  
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,  
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

## IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;  
And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,  
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, 30  
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :  
The level chambers, ready with their pride,  
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :  
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,  
Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,  
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their  
breasts.

## V

At length burst in the argent revelry,  
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,  
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily  
The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay 40  
Of old romance. These let us wish away,  
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,  
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,  
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,  
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

## VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,  
Young virgins might have visions of delight,  
And soft adorings from their loves receive  
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,  
If ceremonies due they did aright ; 50  
As, ~~supperless~~ to bed they must retire,  
And couch supine their beauties, lily white ;  
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require  
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

## VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline :  
The music, yearning like a God in pain,



She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,  
 Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train  
 Pass by—she heeded not at all : in vain  
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier, 60  
 And back retir'd ; not cool'd by high disdain,  
 But she saw not : her heart was otherwhere :  
 She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

## VIII

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,  
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short :  
 The hallow'd hour was near at hand : she sighs  
 Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort  
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport ;  
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,  
 Hoodwink'd with faery fancy ; all amorn, 70  
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,  
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

## IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,  
 She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,  
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire  
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,  
 Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores  
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,  
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,  
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen ; 80  
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things  
 have been.

## X

He ventures in : let no buzz'd whisper tell :  
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords  
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :  
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,  
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,

Whose very dogs would execrations howl  
 Against his lineage : not one breast affords  
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,  
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul. 90

## XI

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,  
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,  
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,  
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond  
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland :  
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,  
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,  
 Saying, " Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place :  
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race !

## XII

Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hildebrand ; 100  
 He had a fever late, and in the fit  
 He cursed thee and thine, both house and land :  
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit  
 More tame for his grey hairs—Alas me ! flit !  
 Flit like a ghost away."—" Ah, Gossip dear,  
 We're safe enough ; here in this arm-chair sit,  
 And tell me how "—" Good Saints ! not here, not here ;  
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

## XIII

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,  
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,  
 And as she mutter'd " Well-a—well-a-day ! " 110  
 He found him in a little moonlight room,  
 Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.  
 " Now tell me, where is Madeline," said he,  
 " O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom  
 Which none but secret sisterhood may see,  
 When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously

## XIV

" St. Agnes ! Ah ! it is St. Agnes' Eve—  
 Yet men will murder upon holy days :  
 Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve, 120  
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,  
 To venture so : it fills me with amaze  
 To see thee, Porphyro !—St. Agnes' Eve !  
 God's help ! my lady fair the conjurer plays  
 This very night : good angels her deceive !  
 But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

Fæbly she laugheth in the languid moon,  
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,  
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone  
 Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-book, 130  
 As spectacted she sits in chimney nook.  
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told  
 His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook  
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,  
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

## XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,  
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart  
 Made purple riot : then doth he propose  
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :  
 " A cruel man and impious thou art : 140  
 Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream  
 Alone with her good angels, far apart  
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go !—I deem  
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

## XVII

" I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"  
 Quoth Porphyro : " O may I ne'er find grace  
 When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer.

If one of her soft ringlets I displace,  
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:  
Good Angela, believe me by these tears; 150  
Or I will, even in a moment's space,  
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,  
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than  
wolves and bears."

## XVIII

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?  
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,  
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;  
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,  
Were never miss'd."—Thus plaining, doth she bring  
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;  
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing, 160  
That Angela gives promise she will do  
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

## XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,  
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide  
Him in a closet, of such privacy  
That he might see her beauty unespied,  
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,  
While legion'd faeries pac'd the coverlet,  
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.  
Never on such a night have lovers met, 170  
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

## XX

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:  
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there  
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame  
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,  
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare  
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.  
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer

The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,  
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead." 180

## XXI

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.  
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd :  
The dame return'd, and whispered in his ear  
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast  
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,  
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain  
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste;  
Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.  
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

## XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade, 100  
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,  
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,  
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware :  
With silver taper's light, and pious care,  
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led  
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,  
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;  
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and  
fled.

## XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;  
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died : 200  
She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin  
To spirits of the air, and visions wide :  
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!  
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,  
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;  
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell  
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

## XXIV

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,  
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries  
 Of fruits and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass, 210  
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,  
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;  
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,  
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,  
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and  
 kings.

## XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;  
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest, 220  
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,  
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:  
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,  
 Save wings, for heaven :—Porphyro grew faint :  
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

## XXVI

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,  
 Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;  
 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;  
 Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees  
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees : 230  
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,  
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,  
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,  
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

## XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,  
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,

Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd  
 Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;  
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;  
 Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain; 240  
 Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;  
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

## XXVIII

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,  
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,  
 And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced  
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness;  
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,  
 And breath'd himself: then from the closet crept,  
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness, 250  
 And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,  
 And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast she  
 slept.

## XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon  
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set  
 A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon  
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—  
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!  
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,  
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,  
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:— 260  
 The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

## XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,  
 In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,  
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap  
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;  
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,

And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;  
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd  
 From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,  
 From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon. 270

## XXXI

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand  
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright  
 Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand  
 In the retired quiet of the night,  
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—  
 “And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!  
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:  
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,  
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.”

## XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm 280  
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream  
 By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm  
 Impossible to melt as iced stream:  
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;  
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:  
 It seem'd he never, never could redeem  
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;  
 So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

## XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—  
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be, 290  
 He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,  
 In Provence call'd “La belle dame sans mercy”:  
 Close to her ear touching the melody;  
 Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:  
 He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly  
 Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone;  
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.



## XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,  
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:  
 There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd 300  
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep,  
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,  
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;  
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;  
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,  
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

## XXXV

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now  
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,  
 Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;  
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear; 310  
 How chang'd thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!  
 Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,  
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!  
 Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,  
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

## XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far  
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,  
 Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star  
 Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;  
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose 320  
 Blendeth its odour with the violet,—  
 Solution sweet; meantime the frost-wind blows  
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet  
 Against the window panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

## XXXVII

"Tis dark: quick pattereth the flow-blown sleet:  
 "This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"  
 'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:

"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!  
 Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—  
 Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring? 330  
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,  
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—  
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

## XXXVIII

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!  
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?  
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil dyed?  
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest  
 After so many hours of toil and quest,  
 A famish'd pilgrim,—sav'd by miracle.  
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest 340  
 Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well  
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

## XXXIX

Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,  
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:  
 Arise—arise! the morning is at hand:—  
 The bloated wassailers will never heed:—  
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed;  
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—  
 Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:  
 Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be, 350  
 For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

## XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,  
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,  
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—  
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—  
 In all the house was heard no human sound.  
 A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;  
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,

Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;  
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor. 360

## XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;  
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;  
There lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,  
With a huge empty flagon by his side:  
The wakeful hound rose, and shook his hide,  
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:  
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—  
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;—  
'The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

## XLII

And they are gone: aye, ages long ago 370  
These lovers fled away into the storm.  
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,  
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form  
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,  
Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old  
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform;  
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,  
For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

JOHN KEATS

5. *Beadsman*: one who prays for departed souls.  
18. *To think how . . . hoods and mails*: This charmingly simple thought is in keeping with the old man's character.  
50-54. *If ceremonies due*: Keats had a love of old legendary and superstitious lore, hence his sympathetic treatment.  
67. *timbrel*: a musical instrument like a tambourine.  
70. *amort*: spiritless.  
136-138. Notice the rich colour of these lines.  
171: *Merlin paid . . . debt*: A reference to the legend that Merlin's father was an evil spirit to whom therefore he owed his life—a debt he paid when Vivien cast over him the spell he himself had taught her.  
208-216. Compare these lines with the description of Christabel's room.

218. *gules*: red. The word is used chiefly in heraldry.  
 237. *poppied warmth of sleep*: an allusion to the soporific effects of poppies.  
 241. *missal*: a Roman Catholic book of prayers, usually illustrated. *Paynims* are pagans who therefore would never unclasp a missal.  
 257. *Morphean amulet*: a charm to induce dreams. Morpheus (the Shaper) was the God of Dreams.  
 266. *soother*: a word coined by Keats; it means "more soothing."  
 288. *woofed*: woven.  
 316-324. Notice in this stanza how warmth and colour are heightened by contrast with the cold outside.  
 344. *haggard*: wildly fantastic.

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

"COURAGE!" he said, and pointed toward the land,  
 "This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."  
 In the afternoon they came unto a land,  
 In which it seemèd always afternoon.  
 All round the coast the languid air did swoon,  
 Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
 Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;  
 And like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
 Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke, 10  
 Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;  
 And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,  
 Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
 They saw the gleaming river seaward flow  
 From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,  
 Three silent pinnacles of agèd snow,  
 Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,  
 Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse;

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown  
 In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale 20

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale  
And meadow, set with slender galingale;  
A land where all things always seem'd the same !  
And round about the keel with faces pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave  
To each, but whoso did receive of them, 30  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;  
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;  
And sweet it was to dream of Father-land,  
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore 40  
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,  
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
Then some one said, " We will return no more " .  
And all at once they sang, " Our island home  
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam

### CHORIC SONG

#### I

There is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies, 50  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;

Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful  
skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,  
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

## II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from weariness ?  
All things have rest : why should we toil alone, 60  
We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;  
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
" There is no joy but calm ! "  
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things ?

## III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood, 70  
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.  
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
Drops in a silent autumn night.  
All its allotted length of days, 80  
The flower ripens in its place.  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.)

## IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
 Death is the end of life ; ah, why  
 Should life all labour be ?  
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
 Let us alone. What is it that will last ? 90  
 All things are taken from us, and become  
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
 To war with evil ? Is there any peace  
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?  
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
 In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :  
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful  
 ease.

## V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem 100  
 Falling asleep in a half-dream !  
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;  
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech :  
 Eating the Lotos day by day,  
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;  
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;  
 To muse and brood and live again in memory, 110  
 With those old faces of our infancy  
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass !

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
 And dear the last embraces of our wives

And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd change ;  
 For surely now our household hearths are cold :  
 Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :  
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
 Or else the island princes over-bold 120  
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
 Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,  
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things,  
 Is there confusion in the little isle ?  
 Let what is broken so remain.  
 The Gods are hard to reconcile :  
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
 There is confusion worse than death,  
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
 Long labour unto aged breath, 130  
 Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars  
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)  
 With half-dropt eyelids still,  
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
 His waters from the purple hill—  
 To hear the dewy echoes calling  
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine— 140  
 To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling  
 Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!  
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

## VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak .  
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek :  
 All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :  
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-  
 dust is blown.



We have had enough of action, and of motion we, 150  
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge  
was seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-foun-  
tains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,  
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined

On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.

For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are  
hurl'd

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are  
lightly curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming  
world:

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,

Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring 160  
deeps and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,  
and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful  
song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of  
wrong,

Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the  
soil,

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,

Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;

Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd—  
down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,

Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel. 170

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the  
shore

Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave  
and oar;

Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

LORD TENNYSON

23. *galingale* : an aromatic herb.  
 44. *Our island home* : Ithaca.  
 133. *amaranth* : a flower considered by poets never to fade. Its colour was purple.  
 133. *moly* : a plant with a black root and a white flower. It had the power to resist Circe's enchantments.  
 142. *acanthus* : a kind of herbaceous plant with prickly leaves.  
 169. *Elysian valleys* : the abode of the blessed after their death.  
 170. *asphodel* : an immortal flower, probably shaped like a lily, and covering the Elysian fields.

## ABT VOGLER

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZING UPON THE  
 INSTRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION)

## I

Would that the structure brave, the manifold music  
 build,  
 Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,  
 Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when  
 Solomon willed  
 Armies of angles that<sup>1</sup> soar, legions of demons that lurk,  
 Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end and of aim,  
 Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-deep  
 removed,—  
 Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable  
 Name,  
 And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess  
 he loved !

## II

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building of  
 mine,  
 This which my keys in a crowd pressed and impor- 10  
 tuned to raise !

Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now and  
now combine,  
Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his  
praise !  
And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge down  
to hell,  
Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of things,  
Then up again swim into sight, having based me my  
palace well,  
Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether springs.

## III

And another would mount and march, like the excellent  
minion he was,  
Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but with many  
a crest,  
Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as  
glass,  
Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest: 20  
For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire,  
When a great illumination surprises a festal night—  
Outlining round and round Rome's dome from space to  
spire)  
Up, the pinnaced glory reached, and the pride of my  
soul was in sight.

## IV

In sight ? Not half ! for it seemed, it was certain, to  
match man's birth,  
Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I ;  
And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to  
reach the earth,  
As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to scale  
the sky:  
Novel splendours burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt  
with mine,  
Not a point nor peak but found and fixed its 30  
wandering star;

Meteor-moons, balls of blaze: and they did not pale nor  
pine,  
For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more  
near nor far.

## V

Nay, more; for there wanted not who walked in the glare  
and glow,  
Presences plain in the place; or, fresh from the Proto-  
plast,  
Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind should  
blow,  
Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their liking  
at last;  
Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through the  
body and gone,  
But were back once more to breathe in an old world  
worth their new;  
What never had been, was now; what was, as it shall be  
anon;  
And what is—shall I say, matched both? for I was 40  
made perfect too.

## VI

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish of  
my soul,  
All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed  
visibly forth,  
All through music and me! For think, had I painted  
the whole,  
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so  
wonder-worth;  
Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect proceeds  
from cause,  
Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale  
is told;  
It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,  
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list enrolled:—

## VII

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,  
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, 50  
they are !  
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to  
man,  
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound,  
but a star.  
Consider it well : each tone of our scale in itself is  
nought ;  
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is  
said :  
Give it to me to use ! I mix it with two in my thought :  
And, there! Ye have heard and seen : consider and  
bow the head!

## VIII

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I reared;  
Gone ! and the good tears start, the praises that come  
too slow;  
For one is assured at first, one scarce can say that he  
feared,  
That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing 60  
was to go.  
Never to be again ! But many more of the kind  
As good, nay, better perchance : is this your comfort  
to me ?  
To me, who must be saved because I cling with my mind  
To the same, same self, same love, same God; ay, what  
was, shall be.

## IX

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable  
Name ?  
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with  
hands!  
What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the  
same?

Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power  
expands ?  
There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall  
live as before ;  
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ; 70  
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good  
more ;  
On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven, a perfect  
round.

X

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall  
exist ;  
Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good, nor  
power  
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the  
melodist  
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.  
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too  
hard,  
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the  
sky,  
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard ;  
Enough that he heard it once : we shall hear it by- Sc  
and-by.

XI

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence  
For the fulness of the days ? Have we withered or  
agonized ?  
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might  
issue thence ?  
Why rushed the discords in but that harmony should  
be prized ?  
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,  
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and  
woe :  
But God has a few of us ~~whom he whispers in the ear ;~~

The rest may reason and welcome : 'tis we musicians know.

## XII

Well, it is earth with me ; silence resumes her reign :

I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce. 90  
Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,

Sliding by semitones, till I sink to the minor,—yes,  
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,  
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into the deep;

Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-place is found,

The C Major of this life : now, now I will try to sleep.

ROBERT BROWNING

- 1-8. Here Browning shows that music has the power to soar.  
17-24. It is Browning's creed that nothing good is finally lost.  
27-32. The heavens are moved by the power of his music just as Abt Vogler's thoughts, carried away by the music, soar upwards.  
34. *Protoplast*: the thing first formed or created.  
37-40. *Or else the wonderful Dead . . . for I was made perfect too*: Music gives him a glimpse of immortality.  
47. *It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws*: The great artist is transcendent, although he is limited by the scope of his art.  
49-50. *a flash of the will that can . . . that made them and, lo, they are !*: The work created by genius is inexplicable. It defies analysis ; there is nothing to do but "consider and bow the head."  
73-76. *All we have willed . . . eternity affirms the conception of an hour*: Browning reaffirms that nothing good is finally lost. There is a finer element latent in human nature, and we are led up to the music of eternity.  
77-80. *The high that proved too high . . . enough that he heard it once*: The ecstatic moment is caught by the artist, but it is not immediately lost. Some day we shall have the like experience. Failure here does not mean that we shall fail hereafter.  
84. *Why rushed the discords in but that harmony should be prized?*: Just as discord passes into harmony and as success rises from failure, so does immortality proceed from death.  
89-96. With the passing of the ecstatic moment the music dies away.

## A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN EUROPE

LET us begin and carry up this corpse,  
 Singing together.  
 Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes.  
 Each in its tether  
 Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,  
 Cared-for till cock-crow :  
 Look out if yonder be not day again  
 Rimming the rock-row !  
 That's the appropriate country ; there, man's thought  
 Rarer, intenser, 10  
 Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,  
 Chafes in the censer.  
 Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop ;  
 Seek we sepulture  
 On a tall mountain, citied to the top,  
 Crowded with culture !  
 All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels ;  
 Clouds overcome it ;  
 No, yonder sparkle is the citadel's  
 Circling its summit. 20  
 Thither our path lies ; wind we up the heights :  
 Wait ye the warning ?  
 Our low life was the level's and the night's ;  
 He's for the morning.  
 Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,  
 'Ware the beholders !  
 This is our master, famous, calm, and dead,  
 Borne on our shoulders.  
 Sleep, crop and herd ! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft,  
 Safe from the weather ! 30  
 He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,  
 Singing together,



He was a man born with thy face and throat,  
 Lyric Apollo !  
 Long he lived nameless : how should spring take note  
 Winter would follow ?  
 Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone !  
 Cramped and diminished,  
 Moaned he, " New measures, other feet anon !  
 My dance is finished " ? 40  
 No, that's the world's way : (keep the mountain-side,  
 Make for the city !)  
 He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride  
 Over men's pity ;  
 Left play for work, and grappled with the world  
 Bent on escaping :  
 " What's in the scroll," quoth he, " thou keepest furled ?  
 Show me their shaping,  
 Theirs, who most studied man, the bard and sage,—  
 Give !"—So, he gowned him. 50  
 Straight got by heart that book to its last page ;  
 Learned, we found him.  
 Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,  
 Accents uncertain ;  
 " Time to taste life," another would have said,  
 " Up with the curtain !"—  
 This man said rather, " Actual life comes next ?  
 Patience a moment !  
 Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,  
 Still, there's the comment. 60  
 Let me know all ! Prate not of most or least,  
 Painful or easy !  
 Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up at the feast,  
 Aye, nor feel queasy."  
 Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,  
 When he had learned it,  
 When he had gathered all books had to give—  
 Sooner, he spurned it.  
 Image the whole, then execute the parts—  
 Fancy the fabric 70

Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,  
Ere mortar dab brick !

(Here's the town-gate reached: there's the market-place  
Gaping before us.)

Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace  
(Hearten our chorus) !

'That before living he'd learn how to live—

No end to learning:

Earn the means first—God surely will contrive

Use for our earning.

80

Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes:

Live now or never !"

He said, "What's time? leave Now for dogs and apes !

Man has Forever."

Back to his book then: deeper drooped his head:

*Calculus* racked him:

Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:

*Tussis* attached him.

"Now, master, take a little rest !" not he !

(Caution redoubled,

90

Step two a-breast, the way winds narrowly !)

Not a whit troubled.

Back to his studies, fresher than at first,

Fierce as a dragon

He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)

Sucked at the flagon.

Oh, if we draw a circle premature,

Heedless of far gain,

Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure,

Bad is our bargain !

100

Was it not great? did not he throw on God,

(He loves the Burthen)—

God's task to make the heavenly period

Perfect the earthen?

Did not he magnify the mind, show clear

Just what it all meant?

He would not discount life, as fools do here,  
 Paid by instalment.  
 He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success  
 Found, or earth's failure: 110  
 "Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered "Yes!  
 Hence with life's pale lure!"  
 That low man seeks a little thing to do,  
 Sees it and does it:  
 This high man, with a great thing to pursue,  
 Dies ere he knows it.  
 That low man goes on adding one to one,  
 His hundreds soon hit:  
 This high man, aiming at a million,  
 Misses a unit. 120  
 That, has the world here—should he need the next,  
 Let the world mind him!  
 This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed  
 Seeking shall find him.  
 So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,  
 Ground he at grammar;  
 Still, thro' the rattle, parts of speech were rife:  
 While he could stammer  
 He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!—  
 Properly based *Oun*— 130  
 Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,  
 Dead from the waist down.  
 Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place:  
 Hail to your purlieus,  
 All ye highfliers of the feathered race,  
 Swallows and curlews!  
 Here's the top-peak; the multitude below  
 Live, for they can, there:  
 This man decided not to Live but Know—  
 Bury this man there? 140  
 Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds  
 form,  
 Lightnings are loosened,  
 Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,

Peace let the dew send !  
 Lofty designs must close in like effects :  
     Loftily lying,  
 Leave him, still loftier than the world suspects,  
     Living and dying.

ROBERT BROWNING

86. *Calculus* : stone.                      88. *Tussis* : cough.  
 129. *Hoti, Oun, De* : Greek conjunctions.

## SOHRAB AND RUSTUM<sup>1</sup>

### AN EPISODE

AND the first grey of morning fill'd the east,  
 And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.  
 But all the Tartar camp along the stream  
 Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep :  
 Sohrab alone, he slept not : all night long  
 He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed ;  
 But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,  
 He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,  
 And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,  
 And went abroad into the cold wet fog,                      10  
 Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.

Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which stood  
 Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand  
 Of Oxus, where the summer floods o'erflow  
 When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere :  
 Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,  
 And to a hillock came, a little back  
 From the stream's brink, the spot where first a boat,  
 Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.

<sup>1</sup> The source of this poem is a translation of the "Shah-Namah," a Persian national epic by Firdausi.

The men of former times had crown'd the top 20  
With a clay fort: but that was fall'n; and now  
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,  
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.  
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood  
Upon the thick-pil'd carpets in the tent,  
And found the old man sleeping on his bed  
Of rugs and felt, and near him lay his arms.  
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step  
Was dull'd; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;  
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said:— 30  
“Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.  
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?”  
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said:—  
“Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa: it is I.  
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe  
Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie  
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.  
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek  
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,  
In Samarcand, before the army march'd; 40  
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.  
Thou knowest if, since from Ader-baijan first  
I came among the Tartars, and bore arms,  
I have still serv'd Afrasiab well, and shown,  
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.  
This too thou know'st, that, while I still bear on  
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,  
And beat the Persians back on every field,  
I seek one man, one man, and one alone—  
Rustum, my father; who, I hop'd, should greet, 50  
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field  
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.  
So I long hop'd, but him I never find.  
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.  
Let the two armies rest to-day: but I  
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords  
To meet me, man to man: if I prevail,

Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall—  
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.  
Dim is the rumour of a common fight, 60  
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk :  
But of a single combat fame speaks clear.”

He spoke : and Peran-Wisa took the hand  
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd and said :—

“ O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine !  
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,  
And share the battle's common chance with us  
Who love thee, but must press for ever first,  
In single fight incurring single risk,  
To find a father thou hast never seen ? 70

That were far best, my son, to stay with us  
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,  
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.  
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,  
To seek out Rustum—seek him not through fight :  
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,  
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son !

But far hence seek him, for he is not here.  
For now it is not as when I was young,  
When Rustum was in front of every fray : 80  
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,  
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old.

Whether that his own mighty strength at last  
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age ;  
Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.  
There go :—Thou wilt not ? Yet my heart forebodes  
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.

Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost  
To us : fain therefore send thee hence, in peace  
To seek thy father, not seek single fights 90  
In vain :—but who can keep the lion's cub  
From ravening ? and who govern Rustum's son ?  
Go : I will grant thee what thy heart desires.”

So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left  
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay,

And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat  
He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,  
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took  
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword ;  
And on his head he placed his sheep-skin cap, 100  
Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul ;  
And raised the curtain of his tent, and call'd  
His herald to his side, and went abroad.

The sun, by this, had risen, and clear'd the fog  
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands :  
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen fil'd  
Into the open plain ; so Haman bade ;  
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa rul'd  
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.  
From their black tents, long files of horse, they 110  
stream'd :

As when, some grey November morn, the files,  
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes,  
Stream over Casbin, and the southern slopes  
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,  
Or some froze Caspian reed-bed, southward bound  
For the warm Persian sea-board : so they stream'd.  
The Tartars of the Oxus, the king's guard,  
First with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears ;  
Large men, large steeds ; who from Bokhara come  
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares. 120  
Next the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,  
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,  
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands ;  
Light men, and on light steeds, who only drink  
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.  
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came  
From far, and a more doubtful service own'd ;  
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks  
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards  
And close-set skull-caps ; and those wilder hordes 130  
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,  
Kalmuks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray

Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,  
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere.  
These all fil'd out from camp into the plain.  
And on the other side the Persians form'd :  
First a light cloud of horse, 'Tartars they seem'd,  
The Ilyats of Khorassan : and behind,  
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,  
Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel. 140  
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came  
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,  
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.  
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw  
That Peran-Wisa kept the 'Tartars back,  
He took his spear, and to the front he came,  
And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood.  
And the old Tartar came upon the sand  
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said :—  
“ Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear ! 150  
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.  
But choose a champion from the Persian lords  
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man.”  
As, in the country, on a morn in June,  
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,  
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—  
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,  
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran  
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they lov'd.  
But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool, 160  
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,  
That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk snow;  
Winding so high, that, as they mount, they pass  
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,  
Chok'd by the air, and scarce can they themselves  
Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries—  
In single file they move, and stop their breath,  
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows—  
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.  
And to Ferood his brother Chiefs came up 170



To counsel : Gudurz and Zoarrah came,  
'And Feraburz, who rul'd the Persian host  
Second, and was the uncle of the King :  
These came and counsell'd; and then Gudurz said :

“ Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,  
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.  
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.  
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits  
And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart :  
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear 180  
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.  
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.  
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up.”

So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and said :—

“ Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said.  
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man.”

He spoke; and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode  
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.  
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,  
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd, 190  
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.  
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,  
Just pitch'd : the high pavilion in the midst  
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.  
And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found  
Rustum : his morning meal was done, but still  
The table stood beside him, charg'd with food;  
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,  
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sate  
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist, 200  
And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stood  
Before him; and he look'd, and saw him stand;  
And with a cry sprang up, and dropp'd the bird,  
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said :—

“ Welcome ! these eyes could see no better sight.  
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink.”

But Gudurz stood in the tent door, and said :—

“ Not now : a time will come to eat and drink,

But not to-day : to-day has other needs.  
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze : 210  
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought  
To pick a champion from the Persian lords  
To fight their champion—and thou know'st his name—  
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.  
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's !  
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.  
And he is young and Iran's chiefs are old,  
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.  
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose."

He spoke : but Rustum answer'd with a smile :— 220  
" Go to ! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I  
Am older : if the young are weak, the King  
Errs strangely : for the King, for Kai Khosroo,  
Himself is young, and honours younger men,  
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.  
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young—  
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.  
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?  
For would that I myself had such a son,  
And not that one slight helpless girl I have, 230  
A son so fam'd, so brave, to send to war,  
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,  
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,  
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,  
And he has none to guard his weak old age.  
There would I go, and hang my armour up,  
And with my great name fence that weak old man,  
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,  
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,  
And leave to death the hosts of thankful kings, 240  
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."

He spoke, and smil'd; and Gudurz made reply :—  
" What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,  
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks  
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,  
Hidest thy face? Take heed, lest men should say,

Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,  
And shuns to peril it with younger men."

And greatly mov'd, then Rustum made reply :—  
"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words? 250  
Thou knowest better words than this to say.  
What is one more, one less, obscure or fam'd,  
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?  
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?  
But who for men of nought would do great deeds?  
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame.  
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;  
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd  
In single fight with any mortal man."

He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd, and ran 260  
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy,  
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.  
But Rustum strode to his tent door, and call'd  
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,  
And clad himself in steel : the arms he chose  
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,  
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,  
And from the fluted spine atop a plume  
Of horsehair wav'd, a scarlet horsehair plume.  
So arm'd he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse, 270  
Follow'd him, like a faithful hound, at heel,  
Ruksh, whose renown was nois'd through all the earth,  
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once  
Did in Bokhara by the river find  
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,  
And rear'd him; a bright bay, with lofty crest;  
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green  
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd  
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know :  
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd 280  
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.  
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts  
Hail'd; but the Tartars knew not who he was.  
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes

Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,  
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,  
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,  
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,  
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—  
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came. 290

And Rustum to the Persian front advanc'd,  
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.  
And as afield the reapers cut a swathe  
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn.  
And on each side are squares of standing corn,  
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare;  
So on each side were squares of men, with spears  
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.  
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast  
His eyes towards the Tartar tents, and saw 300  
Sohrab come forth, and ey'd him as he came.

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,  
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge  
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire—  
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,  
When the frost flowers the whiten'd window panes—  
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts  
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum ey'd  
The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar  
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth 310  
All the most valiant chiefs: long he perus'd  
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.  
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd;  
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,  
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws  
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,  
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound—  
So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly rear'd.  
And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul  
As he beheld him coming; and he stood, 320  
And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said:—  
“O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,

And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold.  
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.  
Behold me: I am vast, and clad in iron,  
And tried; and I have stood on many a field  
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe:  
Never was that field lost, or that foe sav'd.  
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?  
Be govern'd: quit the Tartar host, and come 330  
To Iran, and be as my son to me,  
And fight beneath my banner till I die.  
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."

So he spake, mildly: Sohrab heard his voice,  
The mighty voice of Rustum; and he saw  
His giant figure planted on the sand,  
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief  
Has builded on the waste in former years  
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,  
Streak'd with its first grey hairs: hope fill'd his soul; 340  
And he ran forwards and embrac'd his knees,  
And clasp'd his hand within his own and said:—

"Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!  
Art thou not Rustum? Speak! art thou not he?"

But Rustum ey'd askance the kneeling youth,  
And turn'd away, and spoke to his own soul:—  
"Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean.

False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.  
For if I now confess this thing he asks,  
And hide it not, but say—*Rustum is here*— 350  
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,  
But he will find some pretext not to fight,  
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,  
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.  
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall,  
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry—  
'I challeng'd once, when the two armies camp'd  
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords  
To cope with me in single fight; but they  
Shrank; only Rustum dar'd: then he and I 360

Chang'd gifts, and went on equal terms away.  
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud.  
Then were the chiefs of Iran sham'd through me."

And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud:—  
"Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus  
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast call'd  
By challenge forth: make good thy vaunt, or yield.  
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?  
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee.  
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand  
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,  
There would be then no talk of fighting more.  
But being what I am, I tell thee this;  
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:  
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt, and yield;  
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds  
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer floods,  
Oxus in summer wash them all away."

370

He spoke: and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet:—  
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so.  
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.  
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand  
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.  
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.  
Begin: thou art more vast, more dread than I,  
And thou art prov'd, I know, and I am young—  
But yet Success sways with the breath of Heaven.  
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure  
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.  
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,  
Pois'd on the top of a huge wave of Fate,  
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.  
And whether it will heave us up to land,  
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,  
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,  
We know not, and no search will make us know:  
Only the event will teach us in its hour."

380

390

He spoke; and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd

His spear: down from the shoulder, down it came,  
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk 400  
That long has tower'd in the airy clouds  
Drops like a plummet: Sohrab saw it come,  
And sprang aside, quick as a flash: the spear  
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,  
Which it sent flying wide:—then Sohrab threw  
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield: sharp rang,  
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.  
And Rustum seiz'd his club, which none but he  
Could wield: an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,  
Still rough; like those which men in treeless plains 410  
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,  
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up  
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time  
Has made in Himalayan forests wrack,  
And strewn the channels with torn boughs; so huge  
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck  
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside  
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came  
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.  
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell 420  
To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the sand:  
And now might Sohrab have unsheath'd his sword,  
And pierc'd the mighty Rustum while he lay  
Dizzy, and on his knees, and chok'd with sand:  
But he look'd on, and smil'd, nor bar'd his sword,  
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said:—  
“Thou strik'st too hard: that club of thine will float  
Upon the summer floods, and not my bones,  
But rise, and be not wroth; not wroth am I:  
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul. 430  
Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum: be it so.  
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?  
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too;  
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,  
And heard their hollow roar of dying men;  
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.

Are they from Heaven, these softening of the heart?  
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!  
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,  
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand, 440  
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,  
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.  
There are enough foes in the Persian host  
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;  
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou  
Mayst fight : fight them, when they confront thy spear.  
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"

He ceas'd: but while he spake, Rustum had risen.  
And stood erect, trembling with rage: his club  
He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear. 450  
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right hand  
Blaz'd bright and baleful, like that autumn Star,  
The baleful sign of fevers : dust had soil'd  
His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms.  
His breast heav'd; his lips foam'd; and twice his voice  
Was chok'd with rage : at last these words broke way:—  
" Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!  
Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!  
Fight; let me hear thy hateful voice no more!  
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now 460  
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;  
But on the Oxus sands, and in the dance  
Of battle, and with me, who make no play  
Of war : I fight it out, and hand to hand.  
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge and wine!  
Remember all thy valour : try thy feints  
And cunning : all the pity I had is gone :  
Because thou hast sham'd me before both the hosts  
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."

He spoke; and Sohrab kindled at his taunts, 470  
And he too drew his sword : at once they rush'd  
Together, as two eagles on one prey  
Come rushing down together from the clouds,  
One from the east, one from the west; their shields



Dash'd with a clang together, and a din  
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters  
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,  
Of hewing axes, crashing trees : such blows  
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.  
And you would say that sun and stars took part 480  
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud  
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun  
Over the fighters' head; and a wind rose  
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,  
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair.  
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;  
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand  
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,  
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.  
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes 490  
And labouring breath; first Rustum struck the shield  
Which Sohrab held stiff out : the steel-spik'd spear  
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,  
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.  
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,  
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest  
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,  
Never till now defil'd, sank to the dust;  
And Rustum bow'd his head; but then the gloom  
Grew blacker : thunder rumbled in the air, 500  
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,  
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry :  
No horse's cry was that, most like a roar  
Of some pain'd desert lion, who all day  
Has trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,  
And comes at night to die upon the sand :—  
The two hosts heard that cry, and quak'd for fear,  
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.  
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,  
And struck again; and again Rustum bow'd 510  
His head : but this time all the blade, like glass,  
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,

And in his hand the hilt remain'd alone.  
Then Rustum rais'd his head : his dreadful eyes  
Glar'd, and he shook on high his menacing spear.  
And shouted, Rustum! Sohrab heard that shout.  
And shrank amaz'd : back he recoil'd one step,  
And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing form :  
And then he stood bewilder'd; and he dropp'd  
His covering shield, and the spear pierc'd his side. 520  
He reel'd, and staggering back, sunk to the ground.  
And then the gloom dispers'd, and the wind fell.  
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all  
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair:  
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,  
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.

Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began :—  
“ Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill  
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,  
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent. 530  
Or else that the great Rustum would come down  
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move  
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.  
And then that all the Tartar host would praise  
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,  
To glad thy father in his weak old age.  
Fool! thou art slain, and by an unknown man!  
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be,  
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old.”

And with a fearless mien Sohrab replied :— 540  
“ Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.  
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!  
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.  
For were I match'd with ten such men as thou,  
And I were he who till to-day I was,  
They should be lying here, I standing there.  
But that beloved name unnerv'd my arm—  
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,  
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield  
Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe. 550

And now thou boastest and insult'st my fate.  
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear!  
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!  
My father, whom I seek through all the world,  
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!"

As when some hunter in the spring hath found  
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,  
Upon the craggy isle of a hill lake,  
And pierc'd her with an arrow as she rose,  
And follow'd her to find out where she fell  
Far off:—anon her mate comes winging back  
From hunting, and a great way off describes  
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks  
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps  
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams  
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she  
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,  
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,  
A heap of fluttering feathers: never more  
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;  
Never the black and dripping precipices  
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by:—  
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss—  
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood  
Over his dying son, and knew him not.

560

570

But with cold, incredulous voice, he said:—  
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?  
The mighty Rustum never had a son."

And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:—  
"Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.  
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,  
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,  
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;  
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap  
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.  
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!  
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be!  
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!

580

Yet him I pity not so much, but her,  
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells  
With that old king, her father, who grows grey  
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.  
Her most I pity, who no more will see  
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,  
With spoils and honour, when the war is done.  
But a dark rumour will be bruited up,  
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;  
And then will that defenceless woman learn  
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more;  
But that in battle with a nameless foe,  
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain.”

He spoke; and as he ceas'd he wept aloud,  
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.  
He spoke; but Rustum listen'd, plung'd in thought.  
Nor did he yet believe it was his son  
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew;  
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,  
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,  
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all:  
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear  
Rustum should take the boy, to train in arms;  
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,  
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;  
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.  
So deem'd he; yet he listen'd, plung'd in thought;  
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide  
Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore  
At the full moon: tears gathered in his eyes;  
For he remembered his own early youth,  
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,  
The shepherd from his mountain lodge descries  
A far bright city, smitten by the sun,  
Through many rolling clouds;—so Rustum saw  
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;  
And that old king, her father, who lov'd well  
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child

With joy ; and all the pleasant life they led,  
They three, in that long-distant summer-time—  
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt  
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills 630  
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that Youth,  
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,  
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,  
Like some rich hyacinth, which by the scythe  
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,  
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,  
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,  
On the mown, dying grass ;—so Sohrab lay,  
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.

And Rustum gaz'd on him with grief, and said :— 640

“ Oh Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son  
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have lov'd !  
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men  
Have told thee false ;—thou art not Rustum's son  
For Rustum had no son : one child he had—  
But one—a girl : who with her mother now  
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—  
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war.”

But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath ; for now  
The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce, 650  
And he desired to draw forth the steel,  
And let the blood flow free, and so to die ;  
But first he would convince his stubborn foe—  
And rising sternly on one arm, he said :—

“ Man, who art thou who dost deny my words ?  
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,  
And falsehood, while I liv'd, was far from mine.  
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear  
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,  
That she might prick it on the babe she bore.” 660

He spoke : and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks ;  
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand  
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,  
That the hard iron corslet clank'd aloud :

And to his heart he press'd the other hand,  
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said :—

“ Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie.  
If thou shew this, then art thou Rustum's son.”

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loos'd  
His belt, and near the shoulder bar'd his arm, 670  
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points  
Prick'd : as a cunning workman, in Pekin,  
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,  
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,  
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp  
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands :—  
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd

On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.  
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,  
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die, 680  
A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks.

Him that kind creature found, and rear'd, and lov'd—  
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.

And Sohrab bar'd that figure on his arm,  
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,  
And then he touched it with his hand and said :—

“ How say'st thou ? Is that sign the proper sign  
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's ? ”

He spoke : but Rustum gaz'd, and gaz'd and stood  
Speechless ; and then he utter'd one sharp cry— 690

“ O boy—thy father ! ”—and his voice choked there.

And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,  
And his head swam, and he sunk down to earth.  
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast  
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,  
And with fond faltering fingers strok'd his cheeks,  
Trying to call him back to life : and life

Came back to Rustum, and he op'd his eyes  
And they stood wide with horror ; and he seiz'd  
In both his hands the dust which lay around, 700  
And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair,  
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms :

And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,  
And his sobs chok'd him ; and he clutch'd his sword,  
To draw it, and for ever let life out.

But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,  
And with a soothing voice he spoke and said :—

“ Father, forbear : for I but meet to-day  
The doom that at my birth was written down  
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious 71c  
hand.

Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,  
When first I saw thee ; and thy heart spoke too,  
I know it : but Fate trod those promptings down  
Under its iron heel ; Fate, Fate engag'd  
The strife and hurl'd me on my father's spear.  
But let us speak no more of this : I find  
My father ; let me feel that I have found.  
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take  
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,  
And wash them with thy tears, and say, ‘ My son ! ’ 72c  
Quick ! quick ! for number'd are my sands of life,  
And swift ; for like the lightning to this field  
I came, and like the wind I go away—  
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.  
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be.”

So said he : and his voice releas'd the heart  
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth ; he cast  
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,  
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts  
When they saw Rustum's grief : and Ruksh, the 73c  
horse,

With his head bowing to the ground, and mane  
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe  
First to the one then to the other mov'd  
His head, as if enquiring what their grief  
Might mean ; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,  
The big warm tears roll'd down, and cak'd the sand.  
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said :—

“ Ruksh, now thou grieve'st ; but, O Ruksh, thy feet

Should then have rotted on their nimble joints,  
When first they bore thy master to this field." 740

But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said :—  
" Is this then Ruksh ? How often, in past days,  
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed !  
My terrible father's terrible horse ; and said  
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.  
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane.  
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I ;  
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,  
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.  
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan, 750  
And seen the river of Helmund, and the lake  
Of Zirrah ; and the aged Zal himself  
Has often strok'd thy neck, and given thee food,  
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,  
And said—' O Ruksh ! bear Rustum well !'—but I  
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,  
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan.  
Nor slak'd my thirst at the clear Helmund stream :  
But lodg'd among my father's foes, and seen  
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand, 760  
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,  
And the black Toorkmun tents ; and only drunk  
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,  
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,  
The northern Sir ; and this great Oxus stream—  
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."

And, with a heavy groan, Rustum replied :  
" Oh that its waves were flowing over me !  
Oh that I saw its grains of yellow silt  
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head !" 770

And, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied :—  
" Desire not that, my father ; thou must live.  
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,  
As some are born to be obscur'd, and die.  
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,  
And reap a second glory in thine age.



Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.  
 But come : thou seest this great host of men  
 Which follow me ; I pray thee, slay not these :  
 Let me entreat for them : what have they done ? 78a  
 They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.  
 Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.  
 But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,  
 But carry me with thee to Seistan,  
 And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,  
 Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.  
 And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,  
 And heap a stately mound above my bones,  
 And plant a far-seen pillar over :  
 That so the passing horseman on the waste 79c  
 May see my tomb a great way off, and say—  
 Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,  
 Whom his great father did in ignorance kill—  
 And I be not forgotten in my grave.”

And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied :—  
 “ Fear not ; as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,  
 So shall it be : for I will burn my tents,  
 And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,  
 And carry thee away to Seistan,  
 And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee, 80c  
 With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.  
 And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,  
 And heap a stately mound above thy bones,  
 And plant a far-seen pillar over all :  
 And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.  
 And I will spare thy host : yea, let them go :  
 Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.  
 What should I do with slaying any more ?  
 For would that all whom I have ever slain  
 Might be once more alive ; my bitterest foes, 81a  
 And they who were call'd champions in their time,  
 And through whose death I won that fame I have ;  
 And I were nothing but a common man,  
 A poor, mean soldier, and without renown ;

So thou mightest live too, my son, my son !  
Or rather would that I, even I myself,  
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,  
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,  
Not thou of mine ; and I might die, not thou ;  
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan ; 820  
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine ;  
And say—*O Son, I weep thee not too sore,  
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end.*—  
But now in blood and battles was my youth,  
And full of blood and battles is my age ;  
And I shall never end this life of blood."

Then at the point of death, Sohrab replied :—  
" A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man !  
But thou shalt yet have peace ; only not now ;  
Not yet : but thou shalt have it on that day, 830  
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,  
Thou and the other peers of Kai-Khosroo,  
Returning home over the salt blue sea,  
From laying thy dear master in his grave."

And Rustum gaz'd on Sohrab's face, and said :—  
" Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea !  
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."

He spoke ; and Sohrab smil'd on him, and took  
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eas'd  
His wound's imperious anguish : but the blood 840  
Came welling from the open gash, and life  
Flow'd with the stream : all down his cold white side  
The crimson torrent ran, dim now, and soil'd,  
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets  
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,  
By romping children, whom their nurses call  
From the hot fields at noon : his head droop'd low,  
His limbs grew slack ; motionless, white, he lay—  
White, with eyes clos'd ; only when heavy gasps,  
Deep, heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame, 850  
Convuls'd him back to life, he open'd them,  
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face :

Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs  
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,  
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,  
And youth and bloom, and this delightful world.

So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead.  
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak  
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.  
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd 860  
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear  
His house, now, mid their broken flights of steps,  
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—  
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.

And night came down over the solemn waste,  
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,  
And darken'd all; and a cold fog, with night,  
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,  
As of a great assembly loos'd, and fires 870  
Began to twinkle through the fog: for now  
Both armies mov'd to camp, and took their meal:  
The Persians took it on the open sands  
Southward; the Tartars by the river marge:  
And Rustum and his son were left alone.

But the majestic river floated on,  
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,  
Into the frosty starlight, and there mov'd,  
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasman waste,  
Under the solitary moon: he flow'd 880  
Right for the polar star, past Orgunje,  
Brimming, and bright, and large: then sands begin  
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,  
And split his currents; that for many a league  
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along  
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles—  
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had  
In his high mountain cradle in Pamere,  
A foil'd circuitous wanderer:—till at last  
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide 890  
His luminous home of waters opens, bright

And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bath'd stars  
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

2. *Oxus* : a river flowing to the Sea of Aral. It formed a natural boundary between the wandering tribes of the semi-civilized north and the more prosperous traders of the south.
16. Notice how the gloomy atmosphere of the opening lines is sustained until line 104 by epithets suggesting darkness or cold.
38. *Afrasiab* : King of Tartary. Much of Firdausi's epic tells of the struggles between Tartary and Persia. Rustum finally defeated this king.
40. *Samarcand* : a famous city in Turkestan.
42. *Ader-baijan* : a province of North-western Persia.
82. *Seistan* : a region of Eastern Persia.
101. *Kara-Kul* : a district to the north of the upper part of the Oxus.
- 111-116. Notice the effect of this sustained or Homeric simile. The beauty or picturesqueness of what he is describing carries the poet into a simile of considerable length. Some of Matthew Arnold's similes have been criticized on the grounds that they distract the reader's attention from the main story. There are about fifteen of these epic similes in "Sohrab and Rustum." The most beautiful is perhaps that in lines 314-317 where young Sohrab is compared with "some young cypress, tall and dark and straight."
113. *Casbin* : a city to the south of the Elburz mountains.
115. *frore* : frozen. "Froren" was the past participle of the Old English verb "frēosan."
- 119-120. *Bokhara, Khiva* : districts of Central Asia.
- 121-133. All these tribes were nomads. Most of them gave voluntary service as they were under nobody's authority.
129. *Jaxartes* : a river, sometimes called the Sir Daria or Sir, flowing into the Aral Sea.
132. *unkempt Kuzzaks* : Cossacks with shaggy, uncombed hair.
160. *Cabool* : the chief city of Afghanistan, a district of snows and storms.
230. Some of Rustum's bitterness comes from his belief that younger men are now being given preference and that to him, ageing, there is no consolation in a son.
- 236-240. This sulking of Rustum has its parallel in the Iliad where Achilles withdraws himself into his tent.
277. *dight* : adorned, or arrayed.
278. *crusted* : stiff with gold thread.
286. *Bahrein* : islands in the Persian Gulf and famous for pearls.

288. *tale* : appointed number.
353. *proffer courteous gifts* : this is typical Oriental custom at parting with friends.
412. *Hyphasis and Hydaspes* : tributaries of the Indus. The former flows into the Chenab and the latter is better known as the Jelum or Jhelum.
449. *trembling with rage* : Rustum is already prejudiced against youth so that Sohrab's escape by sheer agility adds to the older man's anger.
452. *that autumn Star* : Sirius, the Dog Star, the ascendancy of which in August was associated with fevers.
- 480-483. These lines are reminiscent of "Paradise Lost," II, 710-720.
- 499-507. The gloom and horror of the scene are suggested rather than fully described. There is a sense of impending fate felt by Nature and also in the breasts of the distant soldiers. Sir Walter Scott once remarked that horses in moments of intolerable anguish utter a most melancholy cry.
- 522-525. Notice the contrast between these lines and the darkness of the actual battle.
570. *glass her* : reflect her in its waters as she flies over it.
596. *dark rumour will be bruited up* : bruit means the same as rumour. Some sinister rumour will be spread abroad.
613. *the style of Rustum's son* : the title or rank assigned to Rustum's son.
- 616-639. There is a sequence of three telling similes. First we are told that grief surged over Rustum's soul as swells the rising tide at the full moon. Then there is an idyllic vision of the past, when Rustum was more active. Finally, there is the pathos of the hyacinth simile.
656. *Truth sits upon the lips of dying men* : cf. Shakespeare, "Richard II," Act II. i.
- O, but they say the tongues of dying men  
Enforce attention like deep harmony....  
For they breathe truth....
679. Zal, having light hair, was thought to be doomed to ill-luck, so that he was abandoned on the Elburz mountains. He was nurtured by a griffin, a fabulous winged monster, a parallel with the upbringing of Romulus and Remus, by a she-wolf, and Assena, father of the Turkish race, who was suckled by a tiger.
710. *thou art Heaven's unconscious hand* : The notion of Fate's intervention is again emphasized in this and the following lines.
730. Notice the subdued note of the poem from this point to the end.
751. *Helmund* : an Afghanistan river flowing into Lake Hamun.

761. *Khiva* : see line 120.  
 763. *Moorghab* : a river of Turkestan. It gives water to the oasis of Merv. Tejend, Kohik, and Sir are all rivers of Turkestan.  
 836. *Soon be that day* : Rustum met his fate by treachery at the hands of one of the sons of Zal.  
 861. *Jemshid in Persepolis* : Jemshid was a legendary king of Persia. He is held up as an example of human vanity. He is supposed to have built the city of Persepolis, once the capital of the Persian empire.  
 878. *Chorasmian waste* : a desert land at the lower end of the Oxus.  
 875-892. As at the end of Wordsworth's "Michael" there is consolation in the thought that Nature and life persist after these sorrowful things. Time, like a rolling stream, will wash away the pains of recollection.

## THE SCHOLAR GIPSY

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;  
 Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes !  
 No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,  
 Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats.  
 Nor the cropp'd grasses shoot another head.  
 But when the fields are still,  
 And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,  
 And only the white sheep are sometimes seen  
 Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green,  
 Come, shepherd, and again renew the quest !     10

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—  
 In this high field's dark corner,—where he leaves  
 His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,  
 And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,  
 Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use—  
 Here will I sit and wait,  
 While to my ear from uplands far away  
 The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,  
 With distant cries of reapers in the corn—  
 All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,  
And here till sun-down, shepherd ! will I be.  
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,  
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see  
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep ;  
And air-swept lindens yield  
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers  
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,  
And bower me from the August sun with shade ;  
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers. 30

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—  
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again !  
The story of that Oxford scholar poor,  
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,  
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,  
One summer-morn forsook  
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,  
And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,  
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,  
But came to Oxford and his friends no more. 40

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,  
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,  
Met him, and of his way of life enquired ;  
Whereat he answer'd, that the gipsy-crew,  
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired  
The workings of men's brains,  
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.  
" And I," he said, " the secret of their art,  
When fully learn'd, will to the world impart ;  
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill." 50

This said, he left them, and return'd no more.—  
But rumours hung about the country-side,  
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,  
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,  
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey,  
The same the gipsies wore.

Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring.  
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,  
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boys  
Had found him seated at their entering. 60

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.  
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,  
And put the shepherds, wanderer ! on thy trace :  
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks  
I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place :  
Or in my boat I lie  
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer-heat,  
Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,  
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,  
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats. 70

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground !  
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,  
Returning home on summer-nights, have met  
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,  
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,  
As the slow punt swings round ;  
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,  
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers  
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,  
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream, 80

And then they land, and thou art seen no more !—  
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come  
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,  
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam.  
Or cross a stile into the public way.  
Oft thou hast given them store  
Of flowers—the frail-leaf'd, white anemone,  
Dark bluebells drench'd with dew of summer eve.  
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—  
But none has words she can report of thee. 90



And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here  
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,  
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass  
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering  
Thames  
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,  
Have often pass'd thee near  
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown ;  
Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,  
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—  
But, when they came from bathing, thou wert 100  
gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,  
Where at her open door the housewife darns,  
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate  
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.  
Children who early range these slopes and late  
For cresses from the rills,  
Have known thee watching, all an April-day,  
The springing pastures and the feeding kine ;  
And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shine,  
Through the long dewy grass move slow away. 110

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood—  
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way  
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see  
With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of grey,  
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly—  
The blackbird, picking food,  
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all ;  
So often has he known thee past him stray,  
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,  
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall. 120

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill  
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,  
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,

Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,  
 Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge ?  
 And thou hast climb'd the hill,  
 And gain'd the white brow of the Cumner range ;  
 Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,  
 The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall—  
 Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange. 130

But what—I dream ! Two hundred years are flown  
 Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,  
 And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe  
 That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls  
 To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe ;  
 And thou from earth art gone  
 Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—  
 Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave  
 Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,  
 Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade. 140

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours !  
 For what wears out the life of mortal men ?  
 'Tis that from change to change their being rolls ;  
 'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,  
 Exhaust the energy of strongest souls  
 And numb the elastic powers.  
 Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,  
 And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,  
 To the just-pausing Genius we remit  
 Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been. 150

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so ?  
 Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire ;  
 Else wert thou long since numbered with the dead !  
 Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire !  
 The generations of thy peers are fled,  
 And we ourselves shall go ;  
 But thou possessest an immortal lot,  
 And we imagine thee exempt from age

And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,  
Because thou hadst—what we, alas ! have not. 16c

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers  
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,  
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things ;  
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,  
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled,  
brings.

O life unlike to ours !  
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,  
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,  
And each half lives a hundred different lives ;  
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope. 17c

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven ! and we,  
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,  
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,  
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,  
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfill'd ;  
For whom each year we see  
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new ;  
Who hesitate and falter life away,  
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—  
Ah ! do not we, wanderer ! await it too ? 18c

Yes, we await it !—but it still delays,  
And then we suffer ! and amongst us one,  
Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly  
His seat upon the intellectual throne ;  
And all his store of sad experience he  
Lays bare of wretched days ;  
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,  
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,  
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,  
And all his hourly varied anodynes. 19c

This for our wisest ! and we others pine,  
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,

And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear ;  
With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend,  
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair—  
But none has hope like thine !  
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost  
    stray,  
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,  
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,  
And every doubt long blown by time away. 200

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,  
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames ;  
Before this strange disease of modern life,  
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,  
Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife—  
Fly hence, our contact fear !  
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood !  
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern  
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,  
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude ! 210

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,  
Still clutching the inviolable shade,  
With a free, onward impulse brushing through.  
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—  
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,  
On some mild pastoral slope  
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales  
Freshen thy flowers as in former years  
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,  
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales ! 220

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly !  
For strong the infection of our mental strife,  
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest ;  
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,  
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.  
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,

Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,  
 And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made ;  
 And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,  
 Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours. 230

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles !  
 —As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,  
 Descried at sunrise an emerging prow  
 Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,  
 The fringes of a southward-facing brow  
 Among the Ægæan isles ;  
 And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,  
 Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,  
 Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine—  
 And knew the intruders on his ancient home, 240

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—  
 And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail ;  
 And day and night held on indignantly  
 O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,  
 Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,  
 To where the Atlantic raves  
 Outside the western straits ; and unbent sails  
 There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of  
 foam,  
 Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come ;  
 And on the beach undid his corded bales. 250

MATTHEW ARNOLD

- 1-5. Arnold's shepherd is no conventional figure but a man accustomed to do shepherd's work.  
 23-28. Notice the colourful effects in these lines.  
 30. *the eye travels down to Oxford's towers* : This mention of Oxford is made almost casually. The place and the fact that he has Glanvil's book with him lead inevitably to the telling of the story.  
 37. *lore* : stories and traditions.  
 39-40. Notice first the idiomatic use of *came* and then its literal use in the next line.  
 59. *ingle* : chimney corner.

59. *boors*: Here the word means "country folk"; there is no suggestion of the other sense of "boor" which means "an ill-mannered fellow."
69. *Cumner hills*: This part of the scenery recalls the Cumnor Hall of Scott's novel, *Kenilworth*.
74. *stripling Thames*: the river Isis.
74. *Bab-lock-hithe*: a ferry across the Isis and almost due west of Cumnor.
79. *Wyckwood boxers*: These lie to the north-west of Oxford.
83. *Fyfield elm*: This tree, which has not been properly identified, is also mentioned in line 106 of "Thyrsis."
- 84-90. A pleasing picture of a typically English scene.
- 91-100. Notice the epithets in this stanza. Contrast them with the somewhat conventional epithets of Goldsmith.
95. *lasher*: sluice water.
98. *outlandish garb*: cf. line 55, "In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey."
- 101-110. The scene here recalls Wordsworth's simplicity and sympathy.
111. *Bagley Wood*: To the east of Boars Hill, a favourite resort of poets, and almost due south of Oxford.
115. *Thessaly*: This piece of ground has not been identified.
120. *spark from heaven*: Compare the ecstatic moment in "Abt Vogler."
125. *Hinksey*: From Oxford to the village of North Hinksey to its south-west there is a raised path through the fields. The warmth of Christ-Church contrasts with the wretchedness of the poor exile's place of refuge. Cf. "Thyrsis," line 2.
134. *studious walls*: A transferred epithet. It is the people who dwell within the walls who are the studious ones.
140. *dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade*: Darkness and dark colours attract Matthew Arnold.
141. The elegiac poet likes to think of his subject as being immortal. It consoles him to think that one in whom he is interested is free from wastage of power or from illness.
147. *teen*: vexation.
149. *just-pausing Genius*: Our genius is the spirit which rules over our life. Here it is shown as graciously allowing us time for reflection.
155. *peers*: those who were alive with you, nearly three hundred years ago.
182. *one*: This is a reference to Tennyson, who, shortly before the year in which "The Scholar Gipsy" was published, had succeeded Wordsworth as Poet Laureate and had commemorated his friend, Arthur Hallam, in "In Memoriam."
198. *a truant boy*: Here is an effective contrast with the cares of manhood that he has been describing.

- 201-205. These lines have a very modern ring about them.
208. *Dido*: She was queen of Carthage and a lover of Æneas. When he deserted her to sail to Italy in fulfilment of his destiny she killed herself. In Book VI of Virgil's "Æneid" the hero, Æneas, is conducted to Hades by the Sibyl. Although he speaks to Dido she will not even look at him. In the same way the Scholar Gipsy would flee from us, fearing our contact.
232. *Tyrian*: from Tyre, the chief port of the Phœnicians.
- 231-250. Notice the quiet joy of the ending and compare it with the ending of "Sohrab and Rustum."
238. *Chian wine*: from the island of Chios (now *Scio*) in the Ægean Sea. Byron also pays tribute to its excellent wine.
239. *tunnies*: one of the largest of food-fishes and found in both the Atlantic and the eastern Mediterranean.
245. *Syrtes*: two sandbanks to the south of Sicily.
247. *Western Straits*: the straits of Gibraltar.
249. *dark Iberians*: Spaniards. The Tyrian trader is here represented as grave and serious and aloof, a contrast with the more cheerful vigour of the Greeks, representatives of a newer civilization. There is something in the "Scholar Gipsy" that recalls shy aloofness and something that makes his story perennially fresh and young.

## ATALANTA'S RACE

**ARGUMENT.** Atalanta, daughter of King Schœneus, not willing to lose her virgin's estate, made it a law to all suitors that they should run a race with her in the public place, and, if they failed to overcome her, should die unrevenged; and thus many brave men perished.

At last came Milanion, the son of Amphidamas, who, out-running her with the help of Venus, gained the virgin and wedded her.

THROUGH thick Arcadian woods a hunter went,  
Following the beasts up, on a fresh spring day;  
But since his horn-tipped bow seldom bent,  
Now at the noontide nought had happed to slay,  
Within a vale he called his hounds away,

Hearkening the echoes of his lone voice cling  
About the cliffs and through the beech-trees ring.

But when they ended, still awhile he stood.  
And but the sweet familiar thrush could hear,  
And all the day-long noises of the wood, 10  
And o'er the dry leaves of the vanished year  
His hounds' feet pattering as they drew anear,  
And heavy breathing from their heads low hung,  
To see the mighty cornel bow unstrung.

Then smiling did he turn to leave the place,  
But with his first step some new fleeting thought  
A shadow cast across his sunburnt face ;  
I think the golden net that April brought  
From some warm world his wavering soul had caught :  
For, sunk in vague sweet longing, did he go. 20  
Betwixt the trees with doubtful steps and slow.

Yet howsoever slow he went, at last  
The trees grew sparser, and the wood was done ;  
Whereon one farewell, backward look he cast,  
Then, turning round to see what place was won,  
With shaded eyes looked underneath the sun,  
And o'er green meads and new-turned furrows brown  
Beheld the gleaming of King Schœneus' town.

So thitherward he turned, and on each side  
The folk were busy on the teeming land, 30  
The man and maid from the brown furrows cried,  
Or midst the newly-blossomed vines did stand,  
And as the rustic weapon pressed the hand  
Thought of the nodding of the well-filled ear,  
Or how the knife the heavy bunch should shear.

Merry it was : about him sung the birds,  
The spring flowers bloomed along the firm dry road,  
The sleek-skinned mothers of the sharp-horned herds



Now for the barefoot milking-maidens lowed ;  
While from the freshness of his blue abode, 40  
Glad his death-bearing arrows to forget,  
The broad sun blazed, nor scattered plagues as yet.

Through such fair things unto the gates he came,  
And found them open, as though peace were there:  
Where through, unquestioned of his race or name,  
He entered, and along the streets 'gan fare,  
Which at the first of folk were well-nigh bare ;  
But pressing on, and going more hastily,  
Men hurrying too he 'gan at last to see.

Following the last of these, he still pressed on, 50  
Until an open space he came unto,  
Where wreaths of fame had oft been lost and won,  
For feats of strength folk there were wont to do.  
And now our hunter looked for something new,  
Because the whole wide space was bare, and stilled  
The high seats were, with eager people filled.

There with the others to a seat he gat,  
Whence he beheld a broidered canopy,  
'Neath which in fair array King Schœneus sat  
Upon his throne with councillors thereby ; 60  
And underneath his well-wrought seat and high,  
He saw a golden image of the sun,  
A silver image of the Fleet-foot One.

A brazen altar stood beneath their feet  
Whereon a thin flame flickered in the wind ;  
Nigh this a herald clad in raiment meet  
Made ready even now his horn to wind,  
By whom a huge man held a sword, entwined  
With yellow flowers ; these stood a little space  
From off the altar, nigh the starting place. 70

And there two runners did the sign abide  
Foot set to foot,—a young man slim and fair,

Crisp-haired, well knit, with firm limbs often tried  
In places where no man his strength may spare ;  
Dainty his thin coat was, and on his hair  
A golden circlet of renown he wore,  
And in his hand an olive garland bore.

But on this day with whom shall he contend ?  
A maid stood by him like Diana clad  
when in the woods she lists her bow to bend, 80  
Too fair for one to look on and be glad,  
Who scarcely yet has thirty summers had,  
If he must still behold her from afar ;  
Too fair to let the world live free from war.

She seemed all earthly matters to forget ;  
Of all tormenting lines her face was clear,  
Her wide grey eyes upon the goal were set  
Calm and unmoved as though no soul were near,  
But her foe trembled as a man in fear,  
Nor from her loveliness one moment turned 90  
His anxious face with fierce desire that burned.

Now through the hush there broke the trumpet's  
    clang  
Just as the setting sun made eventide.  
Then from light feet a spurt of dust there sprang,  
And swiftly they were running side by side ;  
But silent did the thronging folk abide  
Until the turning-post was reached at last,  
And round about it still abreast they passed.

But when the people saw how close they ran,  
When half-way to the starting-point they were, 100  
A cry of joy broke forth, whereat the man  
Headed the white-foot runner, and drew near  
Unto the very end of all his fear ;  
And scarce his straining feet the ground could feel,  
And bliss unhopd for o'er his heart 'gan steal.

But midst the loud victorious shouts he heard  
Her footsteps drawing nearer, and the sound  
Of fluttering raiment, and thereat afeard  
His flushed and eager face he turned around,  
And even then he felt her past him bound 110  
Fleet as the wind, but scarcely saw her there  
Till on the goal she laid her fingers fair.

There stood she breathing like a little child  
Amid some warlike clamour laid asleep,  
For no victorious joy her red lips smiled,  
Her cheek its wonted freshness did but keep ;  
No glance lit up her clear grey eyes and deep,  
Though some divine thought softened all her face  
As once more rang the trumpet through the place.

But her late foe stopped short amidst his course, 120  
One moment gazed upon her piteously,  
Then with a groan his lingering feet did force  
To leave the spot whence he her eyes could see ;  
And, changed like one who knows his time must be  
But short and bitter, without any word  
He knelt before the bearer of the sword ;

Then high rose up the gleaming deadly blade,  
Bared of its flowers, and through the crowded place  
Was silence now, and midst of it the maid  
Went by the poor wretch at a gentle pace 130  
And he to hers upturned his sad white face ;  
Nor did his eyes behold another sight  
Ere on his soul there fell eternal night.

So was the pageant ended, and all folk  
Talking of this and that familiar thing  
In little groups from that sad concourse broke,  
For now the shrill bats were upon the wing,  
And soon dark night would slay the evening,  
And in dark gardens sang the nightingale  
Her little-heeded, oft-repeated tale. 140

And with the last of all the hunter went,  
Who, wondering at the strange sight he had seen,  
Prayed an old man to tell him what it meant,  
Both why the vanquished man so slain had been,  
And if the maiden were an earthly queen,  
Or rather what much more she seemed to be,  
No sharer in the world's mortality.

"Stranger," said he, "I pray she soon may die  
Whose lovely youth has slain so many an one!  
King Schœneus' daughter is she verily, 150  
Who when her eyes first looked upon the sun  
Was fain to end her life but new begun,  
For he had vowed to leave but men alone  
Sprung from his loins when he from earth was gone.

Therefore he bade one leave her in the wood,  
And let wild things deal with her as they might;  
But this being done, some cruel god thought good  
To save her beauty in the world's despite:  
Folk say that her, so delicate and white  
As now she is, a rough root-grubbing bear 160  
Amidst her shapeless cubs at first did rear.

In course of time the woodfolk slew her nurse,  
And to their rude abode the youngling brought,  
And reared her up to be a kingdom's curse,  
Who grown a woman, of no kingdom thought,  
But armed and swift, 'mid beasts destruction wrought,  
Nor spared two shaggy centaur kings to slay  
To whom her body seemed an easy prey.

So to this city, led by fate, she came  
Whom known by signs, whereof I cannot tell, 170  
King Schoeneus for his child at last did claim,  
Nor otherwise since that day doth she dwell  
Sending too many a noble soul to hell—  
What! thine eyes glisten! what then, thinkest thou  
Her shining head unto the yoke to bow?

Listen, my son, and love some other maid,  
For she the soffron gown will never wear,  
And on no flower-strewn couch shall she be laid,  
Nor shall her voice make glad a lover's eye:  
Yet if of Death thou hast not any fear, 180  
Yea—rather, if thou lovest him utterly,  
Thou still may'st woo her ere thou com'st to die.

Like him that on this day thou sawest lie dead;  
For, fearing as I deem the Sea-born One,  
The maid has vowed e'en such a man to wed  
As in the course her swift feet can outrun,  
But whoso fails herein, his days are done:  
He came the nighest that was slain to-day,  
Although with him I deem she did but play.

Behold, such mercy Atalanta gives 190  
To those that long to win her loveliness;  
Be wise! be sure that many a maid there lives  
Gentler than she, of beauty little less,  
Whose swimming eyes thy loving words shall bless,  
When in some garden, knee set close to knee,  
Thou sing'st the song that love may teach to thee."

So to the hunter spake that ancient man,  
And left him for his own home presently:  
But he turned round, and through the moonlight wan  
Reached the thick wood, and there 'twixt tree and 200  
tree  
Distracted he passed the long night feverishly,  
'Twixt sleep and waking, and at dawn arose,  
To wage hot war against his speechless foes.

There to the hart's flank seemed his shaft to grow,  
As panting down the broad green glades he flew,  
There by his horn the Dryads well might know  
His thrust against the bear's heart had been true,  
And there Adonis' bane his javelin slew,

But still in vain through rough and smooth he went,  
For none the more his restlessness was spent. 210

So wandering, he to Argive cities came,  
And in the lists with valiant men he stood,  
And by great deeds he won him praise and fame,  
And heaps of wealth for little-valued blood;  
But none of all these things, or life, seemed good  
Unto his heart, where still unsatisfied  
A ravenous longing warred with tear and pride.

Therefore it happened when but a month had gone  
Since he had left King Schoeneus' city old,  
In hunting-gear again, again alone 220  
The forest-bordered meads did he behold,  
Where still mid thoughts of August's quivering gold  
Folk hoed the wheat, and clipped the vine in trust  
Of faint October's purple-foaming must.

And once again he passed the peaceful gate,  
While to his beating heart his lips did lie,  
That owning not victorious love and fate,  
Said, half aloud, "And here too must I try,  
To win of alien men the mastery,  
And gather for my head fresh meed of fame 230  
And cast new glory on my father's name."

In spite of that, how beat his heart when first  
Folks said to him "And art thou come to see  
That which still makes our city's name accurst  
Among all mothers for its cruelty?  
Then know indeed that fate is good to thee  
Because to-morrow a new luckless one  
Against the whitefoot maid is pledged to run."

So on the morrow with no curious eyes  
As once he did, that piteous sight he saw, 240  
Nor did that wonder in his heart arise

As toward the goal the conquering maid 'gan draw,  
Ner did he gaze upon her eyes with awe,  
Too full the pain of longing filled his heart  
For fear or wonder there to have a part.

But O, how long the night was ere it went!  
How long it was before the dawn begun  
Showed to the wakening birds the sun's intent  
That not in darkness should the world be done!  
And then, and then, how long before the sun 250  
Bade silently the toilers of the earth  
Get forth to fruitless cares or empty mirth!

And long it seemed that in the market-place  
He stood and saw the chaffering folk go by  
Ere from the ivory throne King Schoeneus' face  
Looked down upon the murmur royally,  
But then came trembling that the time was nigh  
When he midst pitying looks his love must claim,  
And jeering voices must salute his name.

But as the throng he pierced to gain the throne, 260  
His alien face distraught and anxious told  
What hopeless errand he was bound upon,  
And, each to each, folk whispered to behold  
His godlike limbs; nay, and one woman old  
As he went by must pluck him by the sleeve  
And pray him yet that wretched love to leave.

For sidling up she said, "Canst thou live twice,  
Fair son? canst thou have joyful youth again,  
That thus thou goest to the sacrifice  
Thyself the victim? nay then, all in vain 270  
Thy mother bore her longing and her pain,  
And one more maiden on the earth must dwell  
Hopeless of joy, nor fearing death and hell.

O, fool, thou knowest not the compact then  
That with the three-formed goddess she has made

To keep her from the loving lips of men,  
And in no saffron gown to be arrayed,  
And therewithal with glory to be paid,  
And love of her the moonlit river sees  
White 'gainst the shadow of the formless trees. 285

Come back, and I myself will pray for thee  
Unto the sea-born framer of delights,  
To give thee her who on the earth may be  
The fairest stirrer up to death and fights,  
To quench with hopeful days and joyous nights  
The flame that doth thy youthful heart consume.  
Come back, nor give thy beauty to the tomb."

How should he listen to her earnest speech?  
Words, such as he not once or twice had said  
Unto himself, whose meaning scarce could reach 295  
The firm abode of that sad hardihood—  
He turned about, and through the marketstead  
Swiftly he passed, until before the throne  
In the cleared space he stood at last alone.

'Then said the King "Stranger, what dost thou here?  
Have any of my folk done ill to thee?  
Or art thou of the forest men in fear?  
Or art thou of the sad fraternity  
Who still will strive my daughter's mates to be,  
Staking their lives to win to earthly bliss 300  
The lonely maid, the friend of Artemis?"

"O King," he said, "thou sayest the word indeed:  
Nor will I quit the strife till I have won  
My sweet delight, or death to end my need.  
And know that I am called Milanion,  
Of King Amphidamas the well-loved son:  
So fear not that to thy old name, O King,  
Much loss or shame my victory will bring."



"Nay, Prince," said Schoeneus, "welcome to this land

Thou wert indeed, if thou wert here to try 310  
Thy strength 'gainst some one mighty of his hand;  
Nor would we grudge thee well-won mastery.  
But now, why wilt thou come to me to die,  
And at my door lay down thy luckless head,  
Swelling the band of the unhappy dead,

Whose curses even now my heart doth fear?  
Lo, I am old, and know what life can be,  
And what a bitter thing is death anear.  
O Son! be wise, and hearken unto me,  
And if no other can be dear to thee, 320  
At least as now, yet is the world full wide,  
And bliss in seeming hopeless hearts may hide:

But if thou lovest life, then all is lost."  
"Nay, King," Milanion said, "thy words are vain.  
Doubt not that I have counted well the cost.  
But say, on what day wilt thou that I gain  
Fulfilled delight, or death to end my pain?  
Right glad were I if it could be to-day,  
And all my doubts at rest for ever lay."

"Nay," said King Schoeneus, "thus it shall not 330  
be,  
But rather shalt thou let a month go by,  
And weary with thy prayers for victory  
What god thou know'st the kindest and most nigh.  
So doing, still perchance thou shalt not die:  
And with my goodwill wouldst thou have the maid,  
For of the equal gods I grow afraid.

And until then, O Prince, be thou my guest,  
And all these troublous things awhile forget."  
"Nay," said he, "could thou give my soul good rest,  
And on mine head a sleepy garland set, 340

Then had I 'scaped the meshes of the net,  
Nor shouldst thou hear from me another word :  
But now, make sharp thy fearful heading sword.

Yet will I do what son of man may do,  
And promise all the gods may most desire,  
That to myself I may at least be true;  
And on that day my heart and limbs so tire,  
With utmost strain and measureless desire,  
That, at the worst, I may but fall asleep  
When in the sunlight round that sword shall  
sweep." 350

He went with that, nor anywhere would bide,  
But unto Argos restlessly did wend;  
And there, as one who lays all hope aside,  
Because the leech has said his life must end,  
Silent farewell he bade to foe and friend,  
And took his way unto the restless sea,  
For there he deemed his rest and help might be.

Upon the shore of Argolis there stands  
A temple to the goddess that he sought,  
That, turned unto the lion-bearing lands, 360  
Fenced from the east, of cold winds hath no thought,  
Though to no homestead there the sheaves are brought,  
No groaning press torments the close-clipp'd murk,  
Lonely the fane stands, far from all men's work.

Pass through a close, set thick with myrtle-trees,  
Through the brass doors that guard the holy place,  
And entering, hear the washing of the seas  
That twice a day rise high above the base,  
And with the south-west urging them, embrace  
The marble feet of her that standeth there 370  
That shrink not, naked though they be and fair.

Small is the fane through which the seawind sings  
About Queen Venus' well-wrought image white,  
But hung around are many precious things,  
The gifts of those who, longing for delight,  
Have hung them there within the goddess' sight.  
And in return have taken at her hands  
The living treasures of the Grecian lands.

And thither now has come Milanion,  
And showed unto the priests' wide open eyes 380  
Gifts fairer than all those that there have shone,  
Silk cloths, inwrought with Indian fantasies,  
And bowls inscribed with sayings of the wise  
Above the deeds of foolish living things,  
And mirrors fit to be the gifts of kings.

And now before the Sea-born One he stands,  
By the sweet veiling smoke made dim and soft,  
And while the incense trickles from his hands  
And while the odorous smoke-wreaths hang aloft,  
Thus doth he pray to her: "O Thou, who oft 390  
Hast holpen man and maid in their distress,  
Despise me not for this my wretchedness !

O goddess, among us who dwell below,  
Kings and great men, great for a little while,  
Have pity on the lowly heads that bow,  
Nor hate the hearts that love them without guile;  
Wilt thou be worse than these, and is thy smile  
A vain device of him who set thee here,  
An empty dream of some artificer?

O, great one, some men love, and are ashamed, 400  
Some men are weary of the bonds of love;  
Yea, and by some men lightly art thou blamed,  
That from thy toils their lives they cannot move,  
And 'mid the ranks of men their manhood prove.  
Alas ! O goddess, if thou slayest me  
What new immortal can I serve but thee?

Think then, will it bring honour to thy head  
 If folk say, ' Everything aside he cast  
 And to all fame and honour was he dead,  
 And to his one hope now is dead at last, 410  
 Since all unholpen he is gone and past ;  
 Ah, the gods love not man, for certainly,  
 He to his helper did not cease to cry.'

Nay, but thou wilt help ; they who died before  
 Not single-hearted as I deem came here,  
 Therefore unthanked they laid their gifts before  
 Thy stainless feet, still shivering with their fear,  
 Lest in their eyes their true thought might appear,  
 Who sought to be the lords of that fair town,  
 Dreaded of men and winners of renown. 420

O Queen, thou knowest I pray not for this :  
 O set us down together in some place  
 Where not a voice can break our heaven of bliss,  
 Where nought but rocks and I can see her face,  
 Softening beneath the marvel of thy grace,  
 Where not a foot our vanished steps can track—  
 The golden age, the golden age come back !

O fairest, hear me now who do thy will,  
 Plead for thy rebel that he be not slain,  
 But live and love and be thy servant still ; 430  
 Ah, give her joy and take away my pain,  
 And thus two long-enduring servants gain.  
 An easy thing this is to do for me,  
 What need of my vain words to weary thee !

But none the less, this place will I not leave  
 Until I needs must go my death to meet,  
 Or at thy hands some happy sign receive  
 That in great joy we twain may one day greet  
 Thy presence here and kiss thy silver feet,  
 Such as we deem thee, fair beyond all words, 440  
 Victorious o'er our servants and our lords."

Then from the altar back a space he drew,  
But from the Queen turned not his face away,  
But 'gainst a pillar leaned, until the blue  
That arched the sky, at ending of the day,  
Was turned to ruddy gold and changing grey,  
And clear, but low, the nigh-ebbed windless sea  
In the still evening murmured ceaselessly.

And there he stood when all the sun was down,  
Nor had he moved when the dim golden light, 450  
Like the far lustre of a godlike town,  
Had left the world to seeming hopeless night,  
Nor would he move the more when wan moonlight  
Streamed through the pillars for a little while,  
And lighted up the white Queen's changeless smile.

Nought noted he the shallow flowing sea  
As step by step it set the wrack a-swim,  
The yellow torchlight nothing noted he  
Wherein with fluttering gown and half-bared limb  
The temple damsels sung their midnight hymn, 460  
And nought but doubled stillness of the fane  
When they were gone and all was hushed again.

But when the waves had touched the marble base,  
And steps the fish swim over twice a-day,  
The dawn beheld him sunken in his place  
Upon the floor; and sleeping there he lay,  
Not heeding aught the little jets of spray  
The roughened sea brought nigh, across him cast,  
For as one dead all thought from him had passed.

Yet long before the sun had showed his head, 470  
Long ere the varied hangings on the wall  
Had gained once more their blue and green and red  
He rose as one some well-known sign doth call  
When war upon the city's gates doth fall,  
And scarce like one fresh risen out of sleep,  
He 'gan again his broken watch to keep.

Then he turned round ; not for the sea-gull's cry  
 That wheeled above the temple in his flight,  
 Not for the fresh south wind that lovingly  
 Breathed on the new-born day and dying night, 480  
 But some strange hope 'twixt fear and great delight  
 Drew round his face, now flushed, now pale and wan,  
 And still constrained his eyes the sea to scan.

Now a faint light lit up the southern sky,  
 Not sun or moon, for all the world was grey,  
 But this a bright cloud seemed, that drew anigh,  
 Lighting the dull waves that beneath it lay  
 As toward the temple still it took its way,  
 And still grew greater, till Milanion  
 Saw nought for dazzling light that round him 490  
 shone.

But as he staggered with his arms outspread,  
 Delicious unnamed odours breathed around,  
 For languid happiness he bowed his head,  
 And with wet eyes sank down upon the ground,  
 Nor wished for aught, nor any dream he found  
 To give him reason for that happiness,  
 Or make him ask more knowledge of his bliss.

At last his eyes were cleared, and he could see  
 Through happy tears the goddess face to face  
 With that faint image of Divinity, 500  
 Whose well-wrought smile and dainty changeless grace  
 Until that morn so gladdened all the place ;  
 Then he unwitting cried aloud her name  
 And covered up his eyes for fear and shame.

But through the stillness he her voice could hear  
 Piercing his heart with joy scarce bearable,  
 That said, " Milanion, wherefore does thou fear,  
 I am not hard to those who love me well ;  
 List to what I a second time will tell.

And thou mayest hear perchance, and live to save 510  
The cruel maiden from a loveless grave.

See, by my feet three golden apples lie—  
Such fruit among the heavy roses falls,  
Such fruit my watchful damsels carefully  
Store up within the best loved of my walls.  
Ancient Damascus, where the lover calls,  
Above my unseen head, and faint and light  
The rose-leaves flutter round me in the night.

And note, that these are not alone most fair  
With heavenly gold, but longing strange they bring 520  
Unto the hearts of men, who will not care,  
Beholding these, for any once-loved thing  
Till round the shining sides their fingers cling.  
And thou shalt see thy well-girt swiftfoot maid  
By sight of these amid her glory stayed.

For bearing these within a scrip with thee,  
When first she heads thee from the starting-place  
Cast down the first one for her eyes to see,  
And when she turns aside make on apace,  
And if again she heads thee in the race 530  
Spare not the other two to cast aside  
If she not long enough behind will bide.

Farewell, and when has come the happy time  
That she Diana's raiment must unbind  
And all the world seems blessed with Saturn's clime,  
And thou with eager arms about her twined  
Beholdest first her grey eyes growing kind,  
Surely, O trembler, thou shalt scarcely then  
Forget the Helper of unhappy men."

Milanion raised his head at this last word, 540  
For now so soft and kind she seemed to be  
No longer of her Godhead was he feared ;

Too late he looked, for nothing could he see  
But the white image glimmering doubtfully  
In the departing twilight cold and grey,  
And those three apples on the steps that lay.

These then he caught up quivering with delight,  
Yet fearful lest it all might be a dream,  
And though aweary with the watchful night,  
And sleepless nights of longing, still did deem 550  
He could not sleep; but yet the first sunbeam  
That smote the fane across the heaving deep  
Shone on him laid in calm untroubled sleep.

But little ere the noontide did he rise,  
And why he felt so happy scarce could tell  
Until the gleaming apples met his eyes.  
Then leaving the fair place where this befell  
Oft he looked back as one who loved it well,  
Then homeward to the haunts of men 'gan wend  
To bring all things unto a happy end. 560

Now has the lingering month at last gone by,  
Again are all folk round the running place,  
Nor other seems the dismal pageantry  
Than heretofore, but that another face  
Looks o'er the smooth course ready for the race,  
For now, beheld of all, Milanion  
Stands on the spot he twice has looked upon.

But yet—what change is this that holds the maid?  
Does she indeed see in his glittering eye  
More than disdain of the sharp shearing blade, 570  
Some happy hope of help and victory?  
The others seemed to say, "We come to die."  
Look down upon us for a little while,  
That dead, we may bethink us of thy smile."



But he—what look of mastery was this  
He cast on her? why were his lips so red?  
Why was his face so flushed with happiness?  
So looks not one who deems himself but dead,  
E'en if to death he bows a willing head;  
So rather looks a god well pleased to find  
Some earthly damsel fashioned to his mind. 580

Why must she drop her lids before his gaze,  
And even as she casts adown her eyes  
Redden to note his eager glance of praise,  
And wish that she were clad in other guise?  
Why must the memory to her heart arise  
Of things unnoticed when they first were heard,  
Some lover's song, some answering maiden's word?

What makes these longings, vague, without a name,  
And this vain pity never felt before, 590  
This sudden languor, this contempt of fame,  
This tender sorrow for the time past o'er,  
These doubts that grow each minute more and more?  
Why does she tremble as the time grows near,  
And weak defeat and woeful victory fear?

But while she seemed to hear her beating heart,  
Above their heads the trumpet blast rang out  
And forth they sprang; and she must play her part,  
Then flew her white feet, knowing not a doubt,  
Though slackening once, she turned her head 600  
about,  
But then she cried aloud and faster fled  
Than e'er before, and all men deemed him dead.

But with no sound he raised aloft his hand,  
And thence what seemed a ray of light there flew  
And past the maid rolled on along the sand;  
Then trembling she her feet together drew  
And in her heart a strong desire there grew

To have the toy; some god she thought had given  
That gift to her, to make of earth a heaven.

Then from the course with eager steps she ran, 610  
And in her odorous bosom laid the gold,  
But when she turned again, the great-limbed man  
Now well ahead she failed nor to behold,  
And mindful of her glory waxing cold,  
Sprang up and followed him in hot pursuit,  
Though with one hand she touched the golden fruit.

Note too, the bow that she was wont to bear  
She laid aside to grasp the glittering prize,  
And o'er her shoulder from the quiver fair  
Three arrows fell and lay before her eyes 620  
Unnoticed, as amidst the people's cries  
She sprang to head the strong Milanion,  
Who now the turning-post had well-nigh won.

But as he set his mighty hand on it  
White fingers underneath his own were laid,  
And white limbs from his dazzled eyes did flit,  
Then he the second fruit cast by the maid,  
But she ran on awhile, then as afraid  
Wavered and stopped, and turned and made no stay,  
Until the globe with its bright fellow lay. 630

Then, as a troubled glance she cast around  
Now far ahead the Argive could she see,  
And in her garment's hem one hand she wound  
To keep the double prize, and strenuously  
Sped o'er the course, and little doubt had she  
To win the day, though now but scanty space  
Was left betwixt him and the winning place.

Short was the way unto such winged feet,  
Quickly she gained upon him till at last

He turned about her eager eyes to meet 64c  
And from his hand the third fair apple cast.  
She wavered not, but turned and ran so fast  
After the prize that should her bliss fulfil,  
That in her hand it lay ere it was still.

Nor did she rest, but turned about to win  
Once more, an unblest woeful victory—  
And yet—and yet—why does her breath begin  
To fail her, and her feet drag heavily?  
Why fails she now to see if far or nigh  
The goal is? why do her grey eyes grow dim? 65c  
Why do these tremors run through every limb?

She spreads her arms abroad some stay to find  
Else must she fall, indeed, and findeth this,  
A strong man's arms about her body twined,  
Nor may she shudder now to feel his kiss,  
So wrapped she is in new unbroken bliss :  
Made happy that the foe the prize hath won,  
She weeps glad tears for all her glory done.

Shatter the trumpet, hew adown the posts!  
Upon the brazen altar break the sword, 66c  
And scatter incense to appease the ghosts  
Of those who died here by their own award.  
Bring forth the image of the mighty Lord,  
And her who unseen o'er the runners hung,  
And did a deed for ever to be sung.

Here are the gathered folk, make no delay,  
Open King Schœneus' well-filled treasury,  
Bring out the gifts long hid from light of day,  
The golden bowls o'erwrought with imagery,  
Gold chains, and unguents brought from over sea, 67c  
The saffron gown the old Phœnician brought,  
Within the temple of the Goddess wrought.

O ye, O damsels, who shall never see  
 Her, that Love's servant bringeth now to you,  
 Returning from another victory,  
 In some cool bower do all that now is due !  
 Since she in token of her service new  
 Shall give to Venus offering rich enow,  
 Her maiden zone, her arrows, and her bow.

WILLIAM MORRIS

- 14. *cornel*: made from the cornel tree, a species of cherry tree.
- 63. *the Fleet-foot One*: Artemis, goddess of the chase, of chastity and of the moon.
- 79. *Diana*: the Roman goddess identified with Artemis.
- 184. *the Sea-born One*: Aphrodite, born of the sea-foam; identified with the Roman goddess Venus.
- 208. *Adonis' bane*: the wild boar. Adonis, a beautiful youth loved by Aphrodite, was killed by a boar.
- 275. *the three-formed goddess*: Artemis.
- 427. *The golden age*: the first period of man's existence on earth when, under Saturn, man lived an ideal life.

## GOBLIN MARKET

MORNING and evening  
 Maids heard the goblins cry :  
 " Come buy our orchard fruits,  
 Come buy, come buy :  
 Apples and quinces,  
 Lemons and oranges,  
 Plump unpecked cherries,  
 Melons and raspberries,  
 Bloom-down-cheeked peaches.  
 Swart-headed mulberries,  
 Wild free-born cranberries,  
 Crab-apples, dewberries,  
 Pine-apples, blackberries,  
 Apricots, strawberries ;—

All ripe together  
In summer weather,—  
Morns that pass by,  
Fair eves that fly;  
Come buy, come buy :  
Our grapes fresh from the vine, 20  
Pomegranates full and fine,  
Dates and sharp bullaces,  
Rare pears and greengages,  
Damsons and bilberries,  
Taste them and try ;  
Currants and gooseberries,  
Bright-fire-like barberries,  
Figs to fill your mouth,  
Citrons from the South,  
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye ; 30  
Come buy, come buy.”

Evening by evening  
Among the brookside rushes,  
Laura bowed her head to hear,  
Lizzie veiled her blushes :  
Crouching close together  
In the cooling weather,  
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,  
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.  
“ Lie close,” Laura said, 40  
Pricking up her golden head :  
“ We must not look at goblin men,  
We must not buy their fruits :  
Who knows upon what soil they fed  
Their hungry thirsty roots ? ”  
“ Come buy,” call the goblins  
Hobbling down the glen.  
“ Oh,” cried Lizzie, “ Laura, Laura,  
You should not peep at goblin men.”  
Lizzie covered up her eyes, 50  
Covered close lest they should look ;

Laura reared her glossy head,  
And whispered like the restless brook :  
" Look Lizzie, look Lizzie,  
Down the glen tramp little men.  
One hauls a basket,  
One bears a plate,  
One lugs a golden dish  
Of many pounds' weight.  
How fair the vine must grow 60  
Whose grapes are so luscious ;  
How warm the wind must blow  
Through those fruit bushes."  
" No," said Lizzie ; " No, no, no ;  
Their offers should not charm us,  
Their evil gifts would harm us."  
She thrust a dimpled finger  
In each ear, shut eyes and ran :  
Curious Laura chose to linger  
Wondering at each merchant man. 70  
One had a cat's face,  
One whisked a tail,  
One tramped at a rat's pace,  
One crawled like a snail,  
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,  
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.  
She heard a voice like voice of doves  
Cooing all together :  
They sounded kind and full of loves  
In the pleasant weather. 80

Laura stretched her gleaming neck  
Like a rush-embedded swan,  
Like a lily from the beck,  
Like a moonlit poplar branch,  
Like a vessel at the launch  
When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen  
Turned and trooped the goblin men,

With their shrill repeated cry,  
 "Come buy, come buy." 90  
 When they reached where Laura was  
 They stood stock still upon the mass.  
 Leering at each other,  
 Brother with queer brother:  
 Signalling each other,  
 Brother with sly brother.  
 One set his basket down,  
 One reared his plate:  
 One began to weave a crown  
 Of tendrils, leaves and rough nuts brown 100  
 (Men sell not such in any town);  
 One heaved the golden weight  
 Of dish and fruit to offer her:  
 "Come buy, come buy," was still their cry.  
 Laura stared but did not stir,  
 Longed, but had no money:  
 The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste  
 In tones as smooth as honey,  
 The cat-faced purr'd,  
 The rat-paced spoke a word 110  
 Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;  
 One parrot-voiced and jolly  
 Cried "Pretty Goblin" still for "Pretty Polly";—  
 One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:

"Good folk, I have no coin;  
 To take were to purloin:  
 I have no copper in my purse,  
 I have no silver either,  
 And all my gold is on the furze 120  
 That shakes in windy weather  
 Above the rusty heather."  
 "You have much gold upon your head,"  
 They answered all together:  
 "Buy from us with a golden curl."

She clipped a precious golden lock,  
She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,  
Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red :  
Sweeter than honey from the rock,  
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine, 130  
Clearer than water flowed that juice ;  
She never tasted such before,  
How could it cloy with length of use ?  
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more  
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore ;  
She sucked until her lips were sore ;  
Then flung the emptied rinds away  
But gathered up one kernel-stone,  
And knew not was it night or day  
As she turned home alone. 140

Lizzie met her at the gate  
Full of wise upbraidings :  
“ Dear, you should not stay so late,  
Twilight is not good for maidens ;  
Should not loiter in the glen  
In the haunts of goblin men.  
Do you not remember Jeanie,  
How she met them in the moonlight,  
Took their gifts both choice and many,  
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers 150  
Plucked from bowers  
Where summer ripens at all hours ?  
But ever in the noonlight  
She pined and pined away ;  
Sought them by night and day,  
Found them no more but dwindled and grew grey ;  
Then fell with the first snow,  
While to this day no grass will grow  
Where she lies low :  
I planted daisies there a year ago 160  
That never blow.  
You should not loiter so.”



"Nay, hush," said Laura:

"Nay, hush, my sister :

I ate and ate my fill,

Yet my mouth waters still:

To-morrow night I will buy more"; and kissed  
her:

"Have done with sorrow ;

I'll bring you plums to-morrow

Fresh on their mother twigs,

Cherries worth getting ;

You cannot think what figs

My teeth have met in,

What melons icy-cold

Piled on a dish of gold

Too huge for me to hold,

What peaches with a velvet nap,

Pellucid grapes without one seed :

Odorous indeed must be the mead

Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they  
drink 180

With lilies at the brink,

And sugar-sweet their sap."

Golden head by golden head,

Like two pigeons in one nest

Folded in each other's wings,

They lay down in their curtained bed :

Like two blossoms on one stem,

Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,

Like two wands of ivory

Tipped with gold for awful kings.

Moon and stars gazed in at them,

Wind sang to them lullaby,

Lumbering owls forbore to fly,

Not a bat flapped to and fro

Round their rest :

Cheek to cheek and breast to breast

Locked together in one nest.

170

190

Early in the morning  
When the first cock crowed his warning,  
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy, 200  
Laura rose with Lizzie :  
Fetched in honey, milked the cows,  
Aired and set to rights the house,  
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,  
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,  
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,  
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed ;  
Talked as modest maidens should :  
Lizzie with an open heart,  
Laura in an absent dream, 210  
One content, one sick in part ;  
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,  
One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came :  
They went with pitchers to the reedy brook ;  
Lizzie most placid in her look,  
Laura most like a leaping flame.  
They drew the gurgling water from its deep ;  
Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags,  
Then turning homewards said : " The sunset 220  
flushes  
Those furthest loftiest crags ;  
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,  
No wilful squirrel wags,  
The beasts and birds are fast asleep."  
But Laura loitered still among the rushes  
And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still,  
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill :  
Listening ever, but not catching  
The customary cry, 230  
" Come buy, come buy,"  
With its iterated jingle

Of sugar-baited words :  
Not for all her watching  
Once discerning even one goblin  
Raving, whisking, tumbling, hobbling ;  
Let alone the herds  
That used to tramp along the glen,  
In groups or single,  
Of brisk fruit-merchant men. 240

Till Lizzie urged, " O Laura, come ;  
I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look :  
You should not loiter longer at this brook :  
Come with me home.  
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,  
Each glow-worm winks her spark,  
Let us get home before the night grows dark :  
For clouds may gather  
Though this is summer weather,  
Put out the lights and drench us through ; 250  
Then if we lost our way what should we do ? "

Laura turned cold as stone  
To find her sister heard that cry alone,  
That goblin cry,  
" Come buy our fruits, come buy."  
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruits ?  
Must she no more that succous pasture find,  
Gone deaf and blind ?  
Her tree of life drooped from the root :  
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache ; 260  
But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,  
Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way ;  
So crept to bed, and lay  
Silent till Lizzie slept ;  
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,  
And gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and  
wept  
As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,  
Laura kept watch in vain  
In sullen silence of exceeding pain. 270  
She never caught again the goblin cry :  
" Come buy, come buy " ;—  
She never spied the goblin men  
Hawking their fruits along the glen :  
But when the moon waxed bright  
Her hair grew thin and grey ;  
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn  
To swift decay and burn  
Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone 280  
She set it by a wall that faced the south ;  
Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,  
Watched for a waxing shoot,  
But there came none ;  
It never saw the sun,  
It never felt the trickling moisture run :  
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth  
She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees  
False waves in desert drouth  
With shade of leaf-crowned trees, 290  
And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,  
Tended the fowls or cows,  
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,  
Brought water from the brook :  
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook  
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear  
To watch her sister's cankerous care,  
Yet not to share. 300  
She night and morning  
Caught the goblins' cry :

"Come buy our orchard fruits,  
Come buy, come buy :"—  
Beside the brook, along the glen,  
She heard the tramp of goblin men,  
The voice and stir  
Poor Laura could not hear ;  
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,  
But feared to pay too dear. 310  
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,  
Who should have been a bride ;  
But who for joys brides hope to have  
Fell sick and died  
In her gay prime,  
In earliest Winter time,  
With the first glazing rime,  
With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter time.

Till Laura dwindling  
Seemed knocking at Death's door : 320  
Then Lizzie weighed no more  
Better and worse ;  
But put a silver penny in her purse,  
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze  
At twilight, halted by the brook :  
And for the first time in her life  
Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin  
When they spied her peeping :  
Come towards her hobbling, 330  
Flying, running, leaping,  
Puffing and blowing,  
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,  
Clucking and gobbling,  
Mopping and mowing,  
Full of airs and graces,  
Pulling wry faces,  
Demure grimaces,

Cat-like and rat-like,  
 Ratel-and wombat-like, 340  
 Snail-paced in a hurry,  
 Parrot-voiced and whistler,  
 Heiter skelter, hurry skurry.  
 Chattering like magpies,  
 Fluttering like pigeons,  
 Gliding like fishes,—  
 Hugged her and kissed her,  
 Squeezed and caressed her :  
 Stretched up their dishes,  
 Panniers and plates : 350  
 “Look at our apples  
 Russet and dun,  
 Bob at our cherries,  
 Bite at our peaches,  
 Citrons and dates,  
 Grapes for the asking,  
 Pears red with basking  
 Out in the sun,  
 Plums on their twigs ;  
 Pluck them and suck them, 360  
 Pomegranates, figs.”—

“ Good folk,” said Lizzie,  
 Mindful of Jeanie :  
 “ Give me much and many ” :—  
 Held out her apron,  
 Tossed them her penny.  
 “ Nay, take a seat with us,  
 Honour and eat with us ; ”  
 They answered grinning :  
 “ Our feast is but beginning. 370  
 Night is yet early,  
 Warm and dew-pearly,  
 Wakeful and starry :  
 Such fruits as these  
 No man can carry ;

Half their bloom would fly,  
 Half their dew would dry,  
 Half their flavour would pass by.  
 Sit down and feast with us,  
 Be welcome guest with us, 380  
 Cheer you and rest with us."—  
 "Thank you," said Lizzie: "But one waits  
 At home alone for me:  
 So without further parleying,  
 If you will not sell me any  
 Of your fruits though much and many,  
 Give me back my silver penny  
 I tossed you for a fee."—  
 They began to scratch their pates,  
 No longer wagging, purring, 390  
 But visibly demurring,  
 Grunting and snarling.  
 One called her proud,  
 Cross-grained, uncivil;  
 Their tones waxed loud,  
 Their looks were evil.  
 Lashing their tails  
 They trod and hustled her,  
 Elbowed and jostled her,  
 Clawed with their nails, 400  
 Barking, mewling, hissing, mocking.  
 Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,  
 Twitched her hair out by the roots,  
 Stamped upon her tender feet,  
 Held her hands and squeezed their fruits  
 Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,  
 Like a lily in a flood,—  
 Like a rock of blue-veined stone  
 Lashed by tides obstreperously,— 410  
 Like a beacon left alone  
 In a hoary roaring sea,

Sending up a golden fire,—  
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree  
White with blossoms honey-sweet  
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—  
Like a royal virgin town  
Topped with gilded dome and spire  
Close beleaguered by a fleet  
Mad to tug her standard down.

420

One may lead a horse to water,  
Twenty cannot make him drink.  
Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,  
Coaxed and fought her,  
Bullied and besought her,  
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,  
Kicked and knocked her,  
Mauled and mocked her,  
Lizzie uttered not a word ;  
Would not open lip from lip  
Lest they should cram a mouthful in :  
But laughed in heart to feel the drip  
Of juice that syruped all her face,  
And lodged in dimples of her chin,  
And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.  
At last the evil people,  
Worn out by her resistance,  
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit  
Along whichever road they took,  
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;  
Some writhed into the ground,  
Some dived into the brook  
With ring and ripple,  
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,  
Some vanished in the distance.

430

440

In a smart, ache, tingle,  
Lizzie went her way ;  
Knew not was it night or day ;



Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,  
Threaded copse and dingle, 450  
And heard her penny jingle  
Bouncing in her purse,—  
Its bounce was music to her ear.  
She ran and ran  
As if she feared some goblin man  
Dogged her with gibe or curse  
Or something worse :  
But not one goblin scurried after,  
Nor was she pricked by fear ;  
The kind heart made her windy-paced 460  
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste  
And inward laughter.

She cried "Laura," up the garden,  
"Did you miss me ?  
Come and kiss me.  
Never mind my bruises,  
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices  
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,  
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.  
Eat me, drink me, love me ; 470  
Laura, make much of me :  
For your sake I have braved the glen  
And had to do with goblin merchant men."

Laura started from her chair,  
Flung her arms up in the air,  
Clutched her hair :  
"Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted  
For my sake the fruit forbidden ?  
Must your light like mine be hidden,  
Your young life like mine be wasted, 480  
Undone in mine undoing  
And ruined in my ruin,  
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden ?"—  
She clung about her sister,

Kissed and kissed and kissed her :  
Tears once again  
Refreshed her sunken eyes,  
Dropping like rain  
After long sultry drouth ;  
Shaking with aguish fear, and pain, 490  
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,  
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,  
She loathed the feast :  
Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung,  
Rent all her robe, and wrung  
Her hands in lamentable haste  
And beat her breast.  
Her locks streamed like the torch  
Borne by a racer at full speed, 500  
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,  
Or like an eagle when he stems the light  
Straight toward the sun,  
Or like a caged thing freed,  
Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her  
heart,  
Met the fire smouldering there  
And overbore its lesser flame ;  
She gorged on bitterness without a name :  
Ah ! fool, to choose such part 510  
Of soul-consuming care !  
Sense failed in the mortal strife :  
Like the watch-tower of a town  
Which an earthquake shatters down,  
Like a lightning-stricken mast,  
Like a wind-uprooted tree  
Spun about,  
Like a foam-topped waterspout  
Cast down headlong in the sea,

She fell at last ;  
Pleasure past and anguish past,  
Is it death or is it life ? 520

Life out of death.  
That night long Lizzie watched by her,  
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,  
Felt for her breath,  
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face  
With tears and fanning leaves :  
But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,  
And early reapers plodded to the place 530  
Of golden sheaves,  
And dew-wet grass  
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,  
And new buds with new day  
Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,  
Laura awoke as from a dream,  
Laughed in the innocent old way,  
Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice ;  
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey,  
Her breath was sweet as May 540  
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years,  
Afterwards, when both were wives  
With children of their own ;  
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,  
Their lives bound up in tender lives ;  
Laura would call the little ones  
And tell them of her early prime,  
Those pleasant days long gone  
Of not-returning time : 550  
Would talk about the haunted glen,  
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,  
Their fruits like honey to the throat  
But poison in the blood ;  
(Men sell not such in any town :)

Would tell them how her sister stood  
 In deadly peril to do her good,  
 And win the fiery antidote :  
 Then joining hands to little hands  
 Would bid them cling together,  
 " For there is no friend like a sister  
 In calm or stormy weather ;  
 To cheer one on the tedious way,  
 To fetch one if one goes astray,  
 To lift one if one totters down,  
 To strengthen whilst one stands."

560

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

22. *bullace*: a wild plum a little bigger than a sloe.  
 75. *wombat*: a small, burrowing animal, native of Australia. It has a thick body and short legs. Its movements are clumsy and recall those of a small bear.  
 76. *ratel*: a small, flesh-eating creature, native of South Africa. In some ways it recalls a badger.  
 83. *beck*: a brook with a stony bed.  
 177. *nab*: having a surface like the pile of a carpet; a surface that can be smoothed down like that of a silk hat. The word is especially applicable to the skin of a peach, which has a velvety softness.  
 257. *succous*: a rarely used adjective meaning juicy or succulent.  
 317. *glazing rime*: covered with hoar frost as if with a sheet of glass.  
 335. *Mopping and mowing*: both these words mean "making grimaces." The first seems connected with the Dutch *moppen*, to pout, and the latter is cognate with the French *moue*, a mouth.  
 353. *bob*: It is still the practice at country fairs to bob for apples or cherries. The fruit is usually floating, and each competitor is allowed to use only his mouth to capture them. As a rule success comes by making sudden little darts or bobs.  
 489. *drouth*: This form of "drought" is often found in poetry.  
 493. *wormwood*: (O.E. *wermod*, cf. *vermouth*). A plant with a bitter taste. It is used in the manufacture of absinthe.

## THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days;  
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
 Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears  
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter.  
     Up vistaed hope, I sped;  
     And shot, precipitated  
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,  
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

But with unhurrying chase, 10  
 And unperturbèd pace,  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
 They beat—and a Voice beat  
 More instant than the Feet—  
 “All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,  
 By many a hearted casement, curtained red,  
 Trellised with intertwining charities;  
 (For, though I knew His love Who followèd,  
     Yet was I sore adread 20  
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)  
 But, if one little casement parted wide,  
 The gust of His approach would clash it to.  
 Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.  
 Across the margent of the world I fled,  
 And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,  
 Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;  
     Fretted to dulcet jars  
 And silvern chatter the pale ports o’ the moon.  
 I said to dawn : Be sudden—to eve : Be soon— 30  
 With thy young skyey blossoms heap me over  
 From this tremendous Lover!

Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!

I tempted all His servitors, but to find

My own betrayal in their constancy,

In faith to Him their fickleness to me,

Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit,

To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;

Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.

But whether they swept, smoothly fleet, 40

The long savannahs of the blue;

Or whether, Thunder-driven,

They clanged His chariot 'thwart a heaven,

Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their  
feet :—

Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.

Still with unhurrying chase,

And unperturbed pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

Came on the following Feet,

And a Voice above their beat—

“ Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.” 50

I sought no more that after which I strayed

In face of man or maid ;

But still within the little children's eyes

Seems something, something that replies,

*They* at least are for me, surely for me!

I turned me to them very wistfully ;

But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair

With dawning answers there,

Their angel plucked them from me by the hair. 60

“ Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share

With me ” (said I) “ your delicate fellowship ;

Let me greet you lip to lip,

Let me twine with you caresses,

Wantoning

With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,

Banqueting

With her in her wind-walled palace,  
Underneath her azured daïs,  
Quaffing, as your taintless way is, 70  
    From a chalice  
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.”  
    So it was done :  
*I* in their delicate fellowship was one—  
Drew the bolt of Nature’s secrecies.  
    *I* knew all the swift importings  
    On the wilful face of skies ;  
    *I* knew how the clouds arise  
    Spurrèd of the wild sea-snortings ;  
    All that’s born or dies 80  
    Rose and drooped with ; made them shapers  
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—  
    With them joyed and was bereaven.  
    *I* was heavy with the even,  
    When she lit her glimmering tapers  
    Round the day’s dead sanctities.  
    *I* laughed in the morning’s eyes.  
*I* triumphed and *I* saddened with all weather,  
    Heaven and *I* wept together,  
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine ; 90  
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart  
    *I* laid my own to beat,  
    And share commingling heat ;  
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.  
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven’s grey cheek.  
For ah ! we know not what each other says,  
    These things and *I* ; in sound *I* speak—  
*Their* sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.  
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth ;  
    Let her, if she would owe me, 100  
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me  
    The breasts o’ her tenderness :  
Never did any milk of hers once bless  
    My thirsting mouth

Nigh and nigh draws the chase,  
 With unperturbèd pace,  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
 And past those noiséd Feet  
 A Voice comes yet more fleet—  
 “Lo ! naught contents thee, who content'st not  
 Me.” 110

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke !  
 My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,  
 And smitten me to my knee ;  
 I am defenceless utterly.  
 I slept, methinks, and woke,  
 And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.  
 In the rash lustihead of my young powers,  
 I shook the pillaring hours  
 And pulled my life upon me ; grimed with smears,  
 I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years— 120  
 My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.  
 My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,  
 Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.  
 Yea, faileth now even dream

The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist ;  
 Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist  
 I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,  
 Are yielding ; cords of all too weak account  
 For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.  
 Ah ! is Thy love indeed 130

A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,  
 Suffering no flowers except its own to mount ?  
 Ah ! must—

Designer infinite !—

Ah ! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with  
 it ?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust ;  
 And now my heart is as a broken fount,  
 Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, split down ever  
 From the dank thoughts that shiver



Upon the sighful branches of my mind. 140  
Such is ; what is to be ?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind ?  
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds ;  
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
From the hid battlements of Eternity,  
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then  
Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again ;  
But not ere him who summoneth  
I first have seen, enwound

With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned ; 150  
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.  
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields  
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields  
Be dinged with rotten death ?

Now of that long pursuit  
Comes on at hand the bruit ;  
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea :  
" And is thy earth so marred,  
Shattered in shard on shard ?

Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me ! 160

Strange, piteous, futile thing !  
Wherefore should any set thee love apart ?  
Seeing none but I makes much of naught " (He said).  
" And human love needs human meriting :

How hast thou merited—  
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot ?  
Alack, thou knowest not  
How little worthy of any love thou art !  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save Me, save only Me ? 170

All which I took from thee I did but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms,  
All which thy child's mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home :  
Rise, clasp My hand, and come."

Halts by me that footfall :  
Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly ?  
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest, 180  
I am He Whom thou seekest !  
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."  
FRANCIS THOMPSON

114-123. In his valuable *Essay on Francis Thompson* (1936), Francis Owlett quotes these lines, showing that in the spring of 1888, when Thompson was a "derelict by the shores of Charing Cross" and was writing such thoughts as these, he had but a shilling in his pocket.

## THE GAZELLES

WHEN the sheen on tall summer grass is pale,  
Across blue skies white clouds float on  
In shoals, or disperse and singly sail,  
Till, the sun being set, they all are gone :

Yet, as long as they may shine bright in the sun,  
They flock or stray through the daylight bland,  
While their stealthy shadows like foxes run  
Beneath where the grass is dry and tanned :

And the waste, in hills that swell and fall,  
Goes heaving into yet dreamier haze ; 10  
And a wonder of silence is over all  
Where the eye feeds long like a lover's gaze :

Then, cleaving the grass, gazelles appear  
(The gentler dolphins of kindlier waves)  
With sensitive heads alert of ear ;  
Frail crowds that a delicate hearing saves,

That rely on the nostrils' keenest power,  
And are governed from trance-like distances  
By hopes and fears, and, hour by hour,  
Sagacious of safety, snuff the breeze. 20

They keep together, the timid hearts ;  
And each one's fear with a panic thrill  
Is passed to an hundred ; and if one starts,  
In three seconds all are over the hill.

A Nimrod might watch, in his hall's wan space,  
After the feast, on the moonlit floor,  
The timorous mice that troop and race,  
As tranced o'er those herds the sun doth pour ;

Like a wearied tyrant sated with food  
Who envies each tiniest thief that steals 30  
A crumb from his abstracted mood,  
For the zest and daring it reveals.

He alone, save the quite dispassionate moon,  
Sees them ; she stares at the prowling pard  
Who surprises their sleep and, ah ! how soon  
Is riding the weakest or sleepest hard !

Let an agony's nightmare course begin,  
Four feet with five spurs a-piece control,  
Like a horse thief reduced to save his skin  
Or a devil that rides a human soul ! 40

The race is as long as recorded time,  
Yet brief as the flash of assassin's knife ;  
For 'tis crammed as history is with crime  
'Twixt the throbs at taking and losing life ;

Then the warm wet clutch on the nape of the neck,  
Through which the keen incisors drive ;  
Then the fleet knees give, down drops the wreck  
Of yesterday's pet that was so alive.

Yet the moon is naught concerned, ah no !  
She shines as on a drifting plank 50  
Far in some northern sea-stream's flow  
From which two numbed hands loosened and sank.

Such thinning their number must suffer ; and worse  
When hither at times the Shah's children roam,  
Their infant listlessness to immerse  
In energy's ancient upland home :

For here the shepherd in years of old  
Was taught by the stars, and bred a race  
That welling forth from these highlands rolled  
In tides of conquest o'er earth's face : 60

On piebald ponies or else milk-white,  
Here, with green bridles in silver bound,  
A crescent moon on the violet night  
Of their saddle cloths, or a sun rayed round,

With tiny bells on their harness ringing,  
And voices that laugh and are shrill by starts,  
Prancing, curvetting, and with them bringing  
Swift cheetahs cooped up in light-wheeled carts,

They come, and their dainty pavilions pitch  
In some valley, beside a sinuous pool, 70  
Where a grove of cedars towers in which  
Hérons have built, where the shade is cool ;

Where they tether their ponies to low-hung boughs,  
Where long through the night their red firs gleam,  
Where the morning stir doth them arouse  
To their bath in the lake, as from dreams to a dream.

And thence in an hour their hunt rides forth,  
And the cheetahs course the shy gazelle  
To the east or west or south or north ;  
And every eve in a distant vale 80

A hecatomb of the slaughtered beasts  
Is piled ; tongues loll from breathless throats ;  
Round large jet eyes the horse-fly feasts . . .  
Jet eyes, which now a blue film coats :

Dead there they bleed, and each prince there  
Is met by his sister, wife, or bride . . .  
Delicious ladies with long dark hair,  
And soft dark eyes, and brows arched wide,

In quilted jacket, embroidered sash,  
And tent-like skirts of pleated lawn ; 90  
While their silk-lined jewelled slippers flash  
Round bare feet bedded like pools at dawn :

So choicefully prepared to please ;  
Young, female, royal of race and mood,  
In indolent compassion these  
O'er those dead beauteous creatures brood :

They lean some minutes against their friend,  
A lad not slow to praise himself,  
Who tells how this one met his end  
Out-raced, or trapped by leopard stealth, 100

And boasts his cheetahs fleetest are ;  
Through his advice the chance occurred,  
That leeward vale by which the car  
Was well brought round to head the herd.

Seeing him bronzed by sun and wind,  
She feels his power and owns him lord,  
Then, that his courage may please her mind,  
With a soft coy hand half draws his sword,

Just shudders to see the cold steel gleam,  
And drops it back in the long curved sheath ; 110  
She will merge his evening meal in a dream  
And embalm his slumber like the wreath

Of heavy-lidded flowers bewitched  
To murmur words of ecstasy  
For king who, though with all else enriched,  
Pays warlock for tones the young hear free.

But, while they sleep, the orphaned herd  
And wounded stragglers, through the night  
Wander in pain, and wail unheard  
To the moon and the stars so cruelly bright. 120

Why are they born ? ah ! why beget  
They in the long November gloom  
Heirs of their beauty, their fleetness . . . yet  
Heirs of their panics, their pangs, their doom ?

That to princely spouses children are born  
To be daintily bred and taught to please,  
Has a fitness like the return of morn :  
But why perpetuate lives like these ?

Why, with horns that jar and with fiery eyes,  
Should the male stags fight for the shuddering does 130  
Through the drear dark nights, with frequent cries  
From tyrant lust or outlawed woes ?

Doth the meaningless beauty of their lives  
Rave in the spring, when they course afar  
Like the shadows of birds, and the young fawn strives  
Till its parents no longest the fleetest are ?

Like the shadows of flames which the sun's rays throw  
On a kiln's blank wall, where glaziers dwell,  
Pale shadows as those from glasses they blow,  
Yet that lap at the blank wall and rebel . . . 140

Even so to my curious trance-like thought  
Those herds move over those pallid hills,  
With fever as of a fail life caught  
In circumstance o'er-charged with ills ;

More like the shadow of lives than life,  
 Or most like the life that is never born  
 From baffled purpose and foredoomed strife,  
 That in each man's heart must be hidden from scorn,

Yet with something of beauty very rare  
 Unseizable, fugitive, half discerned ; 150  
 The trace of intentions that might have been fair  
 In action, left on a face that yearned

But long has ceased to yearn, alas !  
 So faint a trace do they leave on the slopes  
 Of hills as sleek as their coats with grass ;  
 So faint may the trace be of noblest hopes.

Yet why are they born to roam and die ?  
 Can their beauty answer thy query, O soul ?  
 Nay, nor that of hopes which were born to fly,  
 But whose pinions the common and coarse day 160  
 stole.

Like that region of grassy hills outspread,  
 A realm of our thoughts knows days and nights  
 And summers and winters, and has fed  
 Ineffectual herds of vanished delights.

T. STURGE MOORE

8. This is especially appropriate, for the fox seems to quiver into sinuosities as he runs.
25. *Nimrod*: a hunter. Nimrod, great-grandson of Noah, was "a mighty hunter before the Lord" (Genesis x. 9).
- 41-42. Notice the contrast between the race as seen by the pursuer and by his victim.
- 49-52. Nature's unconcern at man's saddest tragedies is also brought out by the descriptions of the oak-tree in "Michael" and of the River Oxus in "Sohrab and Rustum."
- 81-88. Notice the vivid contrast between death and life.

## GATES OF DAMASCUS

Four great gates has the city of Damascus,  
And four Grand Wardens, on their spears reclining,  
All day long stand like tall stone men  
And sleep on the towers when the moon is shining.

*This is the song of the East Gate Warden  
When he locks the great gate and smokes in his garden.*

Postern of Fate, the Desert Gate, Disaster's Cavern, Fort  
of Fear,  
The Portal of Bagdad am I, the Doorway of Diarbekir.

The Persian dawn with new desires may net the flushing  
mountain spires,  
But my gaunt buttress still rejects the suppliance of  
those mellow fires.

Pass not beneath, O Caravan, or pass not singing. Have  
you heard  
That silence where the birds are dead yet something  
pipeth like a bird ?

Pass not beneath ! Men say there blows in stony deserts  
still a rose  
But with no scarlet to her leaf—and from whose heart  
no perfume flows.

Wilt thou bloom red where she buds pale, thy sister rose?  
Will thou not fail  
When noonday flashes like a flail ? Leave, nightingale,  
the Caravan !

Pass then, pass all ! Bagdad ! ye cry, and down the  
billows of blue sky  
Ye beat the bell that beats to hell, and who shall thrust  
ye back ? Not I.



The sun who flashes through the head and paints the shadows green and red—

The sun shall eat thy fleshless dead, O Caravan, O 20  
Caravan !

And one who licks his lips for thirst with fevered eyes shall face in fear

The palms that wave, the streams that burst, his last mirage, O Caravan !

And one—the bird-voiced Singing-man—shall fall behind thee, Caravan !

And God shall meet him in the night, and he shall sing as best he can.

And one the Bedouin shall slay, and one, sand-stricken on the way,

Go dark and blind ; and one shall say—" How lonely is the Caravan !"

Pass out beneath, O Caravan, Doom's Caravan, Death's Caravan !

I had not told ye, fools, so much, save that I heard your Singing-man.

*This was sung by the West Gate's keeper  
When heaven's hollow dome grew deeper.*

30

I am the gate toward the sea ; O sailor man, pass out from me !

I hear you high on Lebanon, singing the marvels of the sea.

The dragon-green, the luminous, the dark, the serpent-haunted sea,

The snow-besprinkled wine of earth, the white-and-blue-flower foaming sea.

Beyond the sea are towns with towers, carved with lions and lily flowers,

And not a soul in all those lonely streets to while away the hours.

Beyond the towns, an isle where, bound, a naked giant  
bites the ground;  
The shadow of a monstrous wing looms on his back :  
and still no sound.

Beyond the isle a rock that screams like madmen shout-  
ing in their dreams,  
From whose dark issues night and day blood crashes 40  
in a thousand streams.

Beyond the rock is Restful Bay, where no wind breathes  
or ripple stirs,  
And there on Roman ships, they say, stand rows of metal  
mariners.

Beyond the bay in utmost West old Solomon the Jewish  
King  
Sits with his beard upon his breast, and grips and guards  
his magic ring ;

And when that ring is stolen, he will rise in outraged  
majesty,  
And take the World upon his back, and fling the World  
beyond the sea.

*This is the song of the North Gate's master,  
Who singeth fast, but drinketh faster.*

I am the gay Aleppo Gate ; a dawn, a dawn and thou art  
there ;  
Eat not thy heart with fear and care, O brother of 50  
the beast we hate !

Thou hast not many miles to tread, nor other foes than  
fleas to dread ;  
Homs shall behold thy morning meal, and Hama see  
thee safe in bed.

Take to Aleppo filigrane, and take them paste of apricots,  
And coffee tables botched with pearl, and little beaten  
brassware pots ;

And thou shalt sell thy wares for thrice the Damascene  
retailers' price,  
And buy a fat Armenian slave who smelleth odorous and  
nice.

Some men of noble stock were made : some glory in the  
murder-blade ;  
Some praise a Science or an Art, but I like honourable  
Trade !

Sell them the rotten, buy the ripe ! Their heads are  
weak ; their pockets burn.  
Aleppo men are mighty fools. Salaam Aleikum ! Safe 60  
return !

*This is the song of the South Gate Holder,  
A silver man, but his song is older.*

I am the Gate that fears no fall : The Mihrab of  
Damascus wall,  
The bridge of booming Sinai : the Arch of Allah all in  
all.

O spiritual pilgrim, rise : the night has grown her single  
horn :  
The voices of the souls unborn are half adream with  
Paradise.

To Meccah thou hast turned in prayer with aching heart  
and eyes that burn :  
Ah, Hajji, whither wilt thou turn when thou art there,  
when thou art there ?

God be thy guide from camp to camp : God be thy shade  
from well to well ;  
God grant beneath the desert stars thou here the 70  
Prophet's camel bell.

And God shall make thy body pure, and give thee know-  
ledge to endure

This ghost-life's piercing phantom-pain, and bring thee  
out to Life again.

And God shall make thy soul a Glass where eighteen  
thousand Æons pass,

And thou shalt see the gleaming Worlds as men see dew  
upon the grass.

And son of Islam, it may be that thou shalt learn at  
journey's end.

Who walks thy garden eve on eve, and bows his head,  
and calls thee Friend.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

25. *Bedoun*: an Arab of the desert.

37. *a naked giant*: Prometheus, a Titan, son of Iapetus and Clymene. He was punished by Zeus for secretly giving men fire which enabled them to develop the arts. Prometheus was chained to a rock of the Caucasus and his liver torn out by an eagle. At night his liver was renewed.

43-47. The lines are not to be taken literally, but they convey the idea of Solomon's power and importance.

53. *filigrane*: a delicate kind of jewel work of threads and beads.

54. *botched*: with pearls standing up like boils or pimples.

59. With all its sensuous loveliness the East has this practical side too.

65. The horn that summons to worship.

## THE OLD VICARAGE, GRANTCHESTER

(*Café des Westens, Berlin, May 1912*)

JUST now the lilac is in bloom,

All before my little room;

And in my flower-beds, I think,

Smile the carnation and the pink;

And down the borders, well I know,

The poppy and the pansy blow. . . .

Oh! there the chestnuts, summer through,

Beside the river make for you

A tunnel of green gloom, and sleep  
 Deeply above ; and green and deep 10  
 The stream mysterious glides beneath,  
 Green as a dream and deep as death.  
 —Oh, damn! I know it! and I know  
 How the May fields all golden show,  
 And when the day is young and sweet,  
 Gild gloriously the bare feet  
 That run to bathe. . .

*Du lieber Gott!*

Here am I, sweating, sick, and hot,  
 And there the shadowed waters fresh  
 Lean up to embrace the naked flesh. 20  
*Temperamentvoll* German Jews  
 Drink beer around ;—and *there* the dew  
 Are soft beneath a morn of gold.  
 Here tulips bloom as they are told ;  
 Unkempt about those hedges blows  
 An English unofficial rose ;  
 And there the unregulated sun  
 Slopes down to rest when day is done,  
 And wakes a vague unpunctual star,  
 A slippered Hesper ; and there are 30  
 Meads towards Haslingfield and Coton  
 Where *das Betreten's* not *verboten*.

*εἴθε Γενόμην* . . . would I were  
 In Grantchester, in Grantchester!—  
 Some, it may be, can get in touch  
 With Nature there, or Earth, or such.  
 And clever modern men have seen  
 A Faun a-peeping through the green,  
 And felt the Classics were not dead,  
 To glimpse a Naiad's reedy head, 40  
 Or hear the Goat-foot piping low : . . .  
 But these are things I do not know.  
 I only know that you may lie  
 Day long and watch the Cambridge sky,

And, flower-lulled in sleepy grass,  
 Hear the cool lapse of hours pass,  
 Until the centuries blend and blur  
 In Grantchester, in Grantchester. . . .  
 Still in the dawnlit waters cool  
 His ghostly Lordship swims his pool 50  
 And tries the strokes, essays the tricks.  
 Long learnt on Heilespond, or Styx.  
 Dan Chaucer hears his river still  
 Chatter beneath a phantom mill.  
 Tennyson notes, with studious eye.  
 How Cambridge waters hurry by . . .  
 And in that garden, black and white,  
 Creep whispers through the grass all night ;  
 And spectral dance, before the dawn,  
 A hundred Vicars down the lawn ; 60  
 Curates, long dust, will come and go  
 On lissom, clerical, printless toe ;  
 And oft between the boughs is seen  
 The sly shade of a Rural Dean. . . .  
 Till, at a shiver in the skies,  
 Vanishing with Satanic cries,  
 The prim ecclesiastic rout  
 Leaves but a startled sleeper-out,  
 Grey heavens, the first bird's drowsy calls,  
 The falling house that never falls. 70

God! I will pack, and take a train,  
 And get me to England once again!  
 For England's the one land, I know,  
 Where men with Splendid Hearts may go ;  
 And Cambridgeshire, of all England,  
 The shire for Men who Understand ;  
 And of *that* district I prefer  
 The lovely hamlet Grantchester.  
 For Cambridge people rarely smile,  
 Being urban, squat, and packed with guile, 80  
 And Royston men in the far South

Are black and fierce and strange of mouth ;  
 At Over they fling oaths at one,  
 And worse than oaths at Trumpington,  
 And Ditton girls are mean and dirty,  
 And there's none in Harston under thirty,  
 And folks in Shelford and those parts  
 Have twisted lips and twisted hearts,  
 And Barton men make Cockney rhymes,  
 And Coton's full of nameless crimes, 90  
 And things are done you'd not believe  
 At Madingley, on Christmas Eve.  
 Strong men have run for miles and miles,  
 When one from Cherry Hinton smiles ;  
 Strong men have blanched, and shot their wives,  
 Rather than send them to St. Ives ;  
 Strong men have cried like babes, bydam,  
 To hear what happened at Babraham.  
 But Grantchester ! ah, Grantchester !  
 There's peace and holy quiet there, 100  
 Great clouds along pacific skies,  
 And men and women with straight eyes,  
 Lithe children lovelier than a dream,  
 A bosky wood, a slumbrous stream,  
 And little kindly winds that creep  
 Round twilight corners, half asleep.  
 In Grantchester their skins are white ;  
 They bathe by day, they bathe by night ;  
 The women there do all they ought ;  
 The men observe the Rules of Thought. 110  
 They love the Good ; they worship Truth ;  
 They laugh uproariously in youth ;  
 (And when they get to feeling old,  
 They up and shoot themselves, I'm told). . . .

Ah, God ! to see the branches stir  
 Across the moon at Grantchester !  
 To smell the thrilling-sweet and rotten  
 Unforgettable, unforgotten

## THE OLD VICARAGE, GRANTCHESTER 257

River-smell, and hear the breeze  
 Sobbing in the little trees. 120  
 Say, do the elm-clumps greatly stand  
 Still guardians of that holy land?  
 The chestnuts shade, in reverend dream,  
 The yet unacademic stream?  
 Is dawn a secret shy and cold  
 Anadyomene, silver-gold?  
 And sunset still a golded sea  
 From Haslingfield to Madingley?  
 And after, ere the night is born,  
 Do hares come out about the corn? 130  
 Oh, is the water sweet and cool,  
 Gentle and brown, above the pool?  
 And laughs the immortal river still  
 Under the mill, under the mill?  
 Say, is there Beauty yet to find?  
 And Certainty? and Quiet kind?  
 Deep meadows yet, for to forget  
 The lies, and truths, and pain? . . . Oh! yet  
 Stands the Church clock at ten to three?  
 And is there honey still for tea? 140

RUPERT BROOKE

32. The German means "Keep of the grass."  
 33. The Greek is translated in the second half of this line.  
 126. *Anadyomene*: rising from the foam. Venus was born thus.

## THE LODESTAR

From hag to hag o'er miles of quaking moss,  
 Benighted in an unknown countryside  
 Among gaunt hills, the stars my only guide,  
 Bewildered by peat-waters black and deep,  
 Wherein the mocking stars swam, at a loss  
 Which way to turn for shelter from the night,  
 I struggled on until, my head grown light



From utter weariness, I almost sank  
To rest among the tussocks soft and dank,  
Drowsing half-dazed and murmuring it were best 10  
To stray no further, but to lie at rest  
Beneath the cold white stars for evermore—  
When suddenly I came across  
A runnel oozing from the moss,  
And knew that if I followed where it led  
'Twould bring me to a valley in the end  
Where there'd be houses and perhaps a bed.  
And so the little runnel was my friend,  
And as I walked beside its path at first  
It kept a friendly silence, then it burst 20  
Into a friendly singing as it rambled  
Among big boulders down a craggy steep.  
'Mid bracken nigh breast-deep  
Through which I scrambled,  
Half-blind and numb for sleep,  
Until it seemed that I could strive no more :  
When, startled by a startled sheep,  
Looking up, I saw a track—  
A stony trackway dimly white  
Disappearing in the night 30  
Across a waste of heather burnt and black ;  
And so I took it, mumbling o'er and o'er  
In witlessness of weariness  
And featherheaded foolishness—  
A track must lead at some time to a door.  
And trudging to this senseless tune  
That kept on drumming in my head,  
I followed where the pathway led ;  
But all too soon  
It left the ling and nigh was lost 40  
Among the bent that glimmered grey  
About my sore-bewildered way,  
But when at length it crossed  
A brawling burn, I saw afar

A cottage window light,  
A star, but no cold heavenly star,  
A warm red star of welcome in the night.  
Far off it burned upon the black hillside,  
Sole star of earth in all that waste so wide—  
A little human lanthorn in the night,  
Yet more to me than all the bright  
Unfriendly stars of heaven so cold and white.

50

And as it dimly shone,  
Though towards it I could only go  
With stumbling step and slow,  
It quickened in my heart a kindred glow,  
And seemed to draw me on  
That last rough mile or so,  
Now seen, now hidden when the track  
Dipped down into a slack,  
And all the earth again was black;  
And from the unseen fern,  
Grey ghost of all bewildered things,  
An owl brushed by me on unrustling wings,  
And gave me quite a turn  
And sent a shiver through my hair.

60

Then again more fair  
Flashed the friendly light,  
Beckoning through the night,  
A golden glowing square,  
Growing big and clearer  
As I drew slowly nearer  
With eager stumbling feet,  
And snuffed the homely reek of peat,  
And saw above me, lone and high,  
A cottage dark against the sky—  
A candle shining on the window-sill.  
With thankful heart I climbed the hill  
And stood at last before  
The dark and unknown door,

70

80

Wondering if food and shelter lay behind,  
 And what the welcome I should find,  
 Whether kindly or unkind ;  
 But I had scarcely knocked to learn my fate  
 When the latch lifted and the door swung wide  
 On creaking hinges, and I saw inside  
 A frail old woman very worn and white,  
 Her body all atremble in the light,  
 Who gazed with strange still eyes into the night  
 As though she did not see me, but looked straight 9c  
 Beyond me to some unforgotten past ;  
 And I was startled when she said at last  
 With strange still voice : *You're welcome, though  
                   you're late.*

And then an old man, nodding in a chair  
 Beside the fire, awoke with sleepy stare,  
 And rose in haste and led her to her seat  
 Beside the cosy hearth of glowing peat,  
 And muttered to me, as he took her hand ;  
*It's queer, it's queer that she to-night should stand*  
*Who has not stood alone for fifteen year.* 10c  
*Though I heard nothing, she was quick to hear.*  
*I must have dozed, but she has been awake*  
*And listening for your footstep since daybreak ;*  
*For she was certain you would come to-day—*  
*Ay, she was sure, for all that I could say ;*  
*Talk as I might, she would not go to bed*  
*Till you should come. Your supper has been spread*  
*This long while ; you'll be ready for your meat.*  
 With that he beckoned me to take a seat  
 Before the table, lifting from the crook 11c  
 The singing kettle ; while with far-off look,  
 As though she neither saw nor heard,  
 His wife sat gazing at the glowing peat.  
 So, wondering sorely, I sat down to eat ;  
 And yet she neither spoke nor stirred,  
 But in her high-backed chair sat bolt-upright

With still grey eyes and tumbled hair, as white  
 As fairy-cotton, straggling o'er her brow  
 And lung in wisps about her wasted cheeks.  
 But when I'd finished and drawn near the fire 120  
 She suddenly turned round to speak,  
 Her old eyes kindling with a tense desire.

Her words came tremblingly : *You'll tell me now  
 What news you bring of him, my son !* Amazed  
 I met that searching and low-furnished look ;  
 And then the old man, seeing I looked dazed,  
 Made shift to swing aside the kettle-crook,  
 And muttered in my ear :

*John Netherton, his name.*—And, as I gazed  
 Into the peat that broke in clear blue flame, 130  
 Remembrance flashed upon me with the name,  
 And I slipped back in memory twenty-year—  
 Back to the fo'c'sle of a villainous boat ;  
 And once again in that hot hell I lay  
 Watching the smoky lantern duck and sway .  
 As though in steamy stench it kept aloft . . .  
 The fiery fangs of fever at my throat,  
 And my poor broken arm, ill-set,  
 A bar of white-hot iron at my side :  
 And as I lay with staring eyes pricked wide 140  
 Throughout eternities of agony

I saw a big black shadow stoop o'er me,  
 And felt a cool hand touch my brow and wet  
 My cracking lips, and sank in healing sleep ;  
 And when I rose from that unfathomed deep  
 I saw the youngest of that rascal crew  
 Beside my bunk, and heard his name, and knew  
 'Twas he who'd brought me ease : but soon ashore  
 We parted, and I never saw him more,  
 Though some while after in another place 150  
 I heard he'd perished in a drunken brawl.

And now the old man touched me, to recall  
 My wandering thoughts, and breathed again the name:

And I looked up into the mother's face  
That burned before me with grey eyes aflame.  
And so I told her how I'd met her son,  
And of the kindly things that he had done :  
And as I spoke her quivering spirit drank  
The news that it had thirsted for so long,  
And for a flashing moment gay and strong 160  
Life flamed in her old eyes, then slowly sank.  
*And he was happy when you saw him last?*  
She asked, and I was glad to answer—Yes.  
Then all sat dreaming without stir or sound  
As gradually she sank into the past  
With eyes that looked beyond all happiness,  
Beyond all earthly trouble and distress,  
Into some other world than ours. The thread  
That long had held the straining life earthbound  
Was loosed at last : her eyes grew dark : her head 170  
Drooped slowly on her breast, and she was dead.

The old man at her side spoke not a word  
As we arose and bore her to her bed,  
And laid her on the clean white quilt to rest  
With calm hands folded on her quiet breast :  
And, hour by hour, he hardly even stirred,  
Crouching beside me in the ingle-seat  
And staring, staring at the still red glow :  
But, when the fire was burning low  
And he arose to bring fresh peat, 180  
He muttered with dull voice and slow :  
*This fire has not burned out through all these years,  
Not since the hearthstone first was set—  
And that is nigh two hundred years ago.  
My father's father built this house, and I . . .  
I thought my son . . .* and then he gave a sigh,  
And as he stooped his wizened cheek was wet  
With slowly trickling tears.  
And now we hearkened while an owl's keen cry  
Sang through the silence as it fluttered nigh 190

The cottage window, dazzled by the light,  
Then back, with fainter hootings, into night.

But when the fresh peats broke into a blaze  
He watched it with a steady dry-eyed gaze,  
And spoke once more: *And he, dead too!*  
*You did not tell her, but I knew . . . I knew!*

And now came all the tale of their distress—  
Their only son in wanton waywardness  
Had left them nearly thirty years ago,  
And they had never had a word from him 200  
In all that time. . . . The reckless blow  
Of his unkindness struck his mother low . . .  
Her hair, as ruddy as the fern  
In late September by a moorland burn,  
Had shrivelled rimy-white  
In one short summer's night:  
And they had looked and looked for his return . . .  
His mother set for him at every meal  
And kept his bed well aired . . . the knife and fork  
I'd used were Jim's . . . but as all hope grew dim 210  
She sickened, dwindling feebler every day,  
Though, when it seemed that she must pass away,  
She grew more confident that, ere she passed,  
A stranger would bring news to her at last  
Of her lost son. *And when I woke in bed*  
*Beside her as the dawn was burning red,*  
*She turned to me with sleepless eyes and said:*  
*"The news will come to-day."*

He spoke no more; and silent in my seat  
With burning eyes upon the burning peat 220  
I pondered on the strangest of strange things  
That had befallen in my vagrant life,  
And how at last my idle wanderings  
Had brought me to this old man and his wife:  
And as I brooded o'er the blaze,  
I thought with awe of that steadfast desire



## NOTES

JOHN DYER (? 1700-1758) was born in Carmarthenshire: in "Grongar Hill," therefore, he was writing about his native countryside, a pleasant but by no means extravagantly beautiful spot by the Towy.

He was educated at Westminster School and, on leaving, returned home to follow his father's profession of solicitor. Drawing and painting attracted him far more than the law, which he soon abandoned. To paint from nature gave him delight as he wandered freely over South Wales. "Grongar Hill" (1726) has something of a painter's searching yet creative eye for different aspects and groupings of his theme.

A love of painting took him to Rome, but the chief outcome of his visit was a long poem, "Ruins of Rome" (1740). He thought that the "Ruins of Rome" stood in the same relation to "Grongar Hill" as "Paradise Lost" did to "L'Allegro." Dyer clearly preferred his later poem, for it begins:

Enough of Grongar and the shady dales  
Of winding Towy, Merlin's fabled haunt,  
I sung inglorious.

To-day very few read the "Ruins of Rome," so that poets are not always reliable critics of the value of their work.

Not long after his return from Rome he entered the ministry, and, at the same period, married a lady "whose grandmother was a Shakespeare, descended from a brother of everybody's Shakespeare." Dyer died in 1758.

"Grongar Hill" (1726) was published in the same year as *Gulliver's Travels*. The date is significant, for in 1722 Pope in a letter to Mrs. J. Cowper had written, "It is time enough to like, or affect to like, the country when one is out of love with all but one's self." Dyer, as a lover of nature, was a pioneer in the reaction against restraint, over-fondness for wit and satire, and the contemporary preference of town to country.

It must also be noticed, however, that Dyer looks backward to Milton's "L'Allegro" for his versification, the octosyllabic couplet, which, in "Grongar Hill," is handled with ease and grace, but with too much regularity. Dyer's diction "About his chequer'd sides I wind," is certainly reminiscent of Milton's "Dancing in the chequer'd shade."



This does not mean that Dyer was a mere imitator. He has an independence of outlook, though he may not appear to write with vigour. Like his far greater contemporary, Thomas Gray, he has a tendency to serious reflection and moralizing. This is to be expected of a poet whose theme is that Pleasure (personified) is never to be found in the town, but is ever pacing the meads and mountains in company with Quiet.

Professor Saintsbury remarks of this poem: " ' Grongar Hill ' itself is one of those poems which occupy a place of their own, humble though it may be, as compared with the great epics and tragedies, simple and of little variety, as compared with the garlands or paradises of the essentially lyrical poets, but secure, distinguished and, practically, unique."

THOMAS CHATTERTON (1752-1770) was born in Bristol. His father, who had died three months earlier, had been a subchanter in Bristol cathedral and a master at the local free school. For generations the Chattertons had been sextons to the neighbouring church of St. Mary Redcliffe.

From his father, who took a delight in reading, music, and old coins, Chatterton inherited a keen interest in the past. Even at the age of eight the young boy made up his mind to become famous. He loved reading a great black-letter Bible which fired his imagination, so that he eagerly devoured all kinds of reading, especially in big books. He waded through all manner of books, but took particular delight in those about history and heraldry.

At the age of nine he went to Colson's Hospital, a local school where the Bluecoat dress was worn. His chief joy was not in the three R's, but in sitting in an attic at home drawing pictures of knights and heraldic designs.

In this attic he found a number of old writings on parchment. They had previously been stored in an old oak chest in the muniment room of St. Mary Redcliffe, and were the remnants of a much greater collection of manuscripts, the most precious of which had been put into a place of greater safety. Chatterton's father had taken home those that remained, presumably because they were unwanted, so that his wife could use them up for dress patterns or thread papers. Among these papers were some blank sheets on which Chatterton began to inscribe the Rowley poems. Thomas Rowley, an ardent Yorkist, was a priest in Bristol in the reigns of Henry VI and Edward IV, and Chatterton, in order to give colour to a not very serious literary forgery, proclaimed this priest to be the author of some remarkable poetry.

Chatterton seems to have written out his poems first in eighteenth century English and then to have turned them into "Rowley" English, a language he himself had made up from the vocabulary to Speght's *Chaucer* (1598), Kersey's *Dictionarium*

*Anglo-Britannicum* (1764), and Bailey's *Universal Etymological Dictionary* (1737). It is not profitable here to go deeply into the Rowley controversy: fuller information will be found in Maurice Evan Hare's edition of Chatterton. We learn that Chatterton made his parchments appear very old by smearing the folds with glue and varnish and by holding the pages over a candle.

Chatterton's downfall followed from his having sent to Horace Walpole, author of *The Castle of Otranto*, a manuscript purporting to have been "wrote by T. Rowleie. 1459," and entitled *The Ryse of Peyncteyning yn Englande*. This was a clumsy fraud, for the style and language closely resemble Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Walpole showed the manuscript to Thomas Gray, the poet, who at once detected the forgery and, further, noticed some reminiscences of his own "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" in a Rowley poem enclosed with the other spurious manuscript. Walpole wrote a very sharp letter to Chatterton and refused to answer further letters.

From the age of thirteen onwards Chatterton had been employed by a Bristol lawyer, but, although he was diligent, his heart was not in the work. Determined on a literary career, and encouraged by having had articles published in four or five London papers, he left Bristol in April 1770 and came to London.

There was not much cause for optimism, for he had not been paid for these contributions. He applied to these papers in turn, but received little encouragement. He wrote home cheerful letters, and, when he received five pounds for a comic opera he had written, he sent home a box of presents. Even when a child of eight he had promised his mother and sister that when he became famous he would deck them out in finery.

His "Balade of Charitie" was refused by the *Town and Country* magazine about a month before August 24th, 1770, when, starving, but too proud to accept charity, he poisoned himself by taking arsenic. We must beware of letting our pity take away what should be given in admiration of his great achievements. He was no weakling remembered only for his misfortunes. Mr. Watts-Dunton remarks on his extraordinary metrical inventiveness. He compares Keats's "The Eve of St. Agnes" with the "Excelente Balade of Charitie" and says that it was only in his best work that Keats reached that remarkable dramatic objectivity which was "the very core and centre of Chatterton's genius." Mr. Maurice Evan Hare draws attention to the influence Chatterton had on Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats, who always speak of him with great affection. This critic justly says, "Chatterton's best work has an inspiration, a singular and unique charm both of thought and of music that is of the first order of English poetry."

Although Chatterton had a perfect command of the heroic couplet, then so much in favour, he preferred stanzaic forms, so that here we have the seven line stanza which had a considerable vogue from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. This stanza was used by Chaucer, and, having been copied from Chaucer by James the First of Scotland in his "*Kingis Quhair*," was afterwards known as "rhyme royal." Spenser had used this stanza in his "*Four Hymnes*": Chatterton here uses Milton's adaptation of the stanza by making the seventh line an alexandrine. Compare this poem with the first four verses of Milton's "*On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*" and with "*The Passion*."

The influence of Spenser is everywhere apparent in this poem. Chatterton does not make poetry out of his own sorrow, but is remarkably impersonal and detached. It is for this escape from pain into a world of romance and romantic sentiment that Chatterton is so deeply indebted to Spenser.

In the recently published *Essays by Divers Hands*, Vol. XVI, issued by the Royal Society of Literature, appears E. H. W. Meyerstein's lecture on "Chatterton: His Significance To-day," a sound, well-balanced and constructive piece of criticism.

Mr. Meyerstein draws particular attention to Chatterton's passion for publicity, his pride ("nineteen-twentieths of my composition is pride"), and, above all, his loneliness.

Contemporary demolitions in Bristol stirred Chatterton to imagine an ideal past, an illusion to which he clung tenaciously. This past he idealized: life was lived not for money, and churches were built to the glory of God by princely-minded merchants.

Mr. Meyerstein compares the "*Balade of Charitie*" with Wordsworth's "*Resolution and Independence*" in that both tell of the help that man can give to man in his dire need.

It is significant that Keats called Chatterton the most English of our poets except Shakespeare. It may therefore be regretted that strange, unetymological spellings (or, as Chatterton called it, "the old rust") were allowed to mask his plain, forthright English.

*Note by Steevens on horse-milliner.*

One morning, while Mr. Tyrwhitt and I were at Bristol, in 1776, we had not proceeded far from our lodging before he found he had left on his table a memorandum book which it was necessary he should have about him. He therefore returned to fetch it, while I stood in the very place we parted at, looking on the objects about me. By this spot, as I was subsequently assured, the young Chatterton would naturally pass to the Charity School on St. Augustine's-Back, where he was educated. But whether this circumstance be correctly stated or not is immaterial

to the general tendency of the following remark. On the spot, however, where I was standing, our retentive observer had picked up an idea which afterwards found its way into his "Excelente Balade of Charitie, as wroten bie the gode Prieste Thomas Rowleis, 1464."

"For the *horse-milliner* his head with roses digite." The considerate reader must obviously have stared on being informed that such a term and such a trade had been extant in 1464; but his wonder would have ceased had he been convinced, as I am, that in a public part of Bristol, full in sight of every passer-by, was a saddler's shop over which was inscribed A or B (no matter which) Horse-Milliner. On the outside of one of the windows of the same operator, stood (and I suppose yet stands) a wooden horse dressed out with ribbons, to explain the nature of *horse-millinery*. We have here perhaps the history of this modern image, which was impressed by Chatterton into his description of an "Abbote of Seyncte Godwyne's Convente."

**OLIVER GOLDSMITH** (1728-1774) was born at the village of Pallas, near Ballymahon, in the south of the county of Longford, Ireland. His father, Charles Goldsmith, was a Protestant clergyman with a small income. Two years after Oliver's birth he became rector of Kilkenny West in the neighbouring county of Westmeath. Even with this stroke of fortune the family were not very well off as there were five children, Oliver being the youngest.

At the village school Oliver was taught by Thomas Byrne, himself a competent rhymers and a storehouse of quaint Irish folk-lore. This schoolmaster Goldsmith endeared to posterity by the famous character sketch in "The Deserted Village."

While a schoolboy Goldsmith was stricken with smallpox which left his face scarred and pitted so that he was frequently exposed to the ridicule of his schoolfellows, treatment which made him shy and keenly sensitive. For some years, even when he was at college, this shyness and reticence were mistaken for dullness.

In 1744 he went to Trinity College, Dublin, in the wake of his brother Henry, who had won a scholarship some five years previously. Oliver had to enter as a "poor scholar" or sizer. This meant his having to carry out sundry menial tasks. His tutor proved harsh and unsympathetic; the result was that Goldsmith became an idler. In 1747 his father died and Goldsmith was left without resources, but through the kindness of an uncle was able to stay on long enough to take his B.A. degree (1749). His mother wished him to enter the ministry, but instead he spent the next two years fishing and playing the flute, or telling stories

to wide-eyed village children. From the vividness of one of the scenes in his play "She Stoops to Conquer," he seems often to have visited the alehouse.

As a result of this blissful period he was, in 1751, refused ordination. In the following year his uncle sent him to Edinburgh to study medicine. After two years' study he set off for Leyden, in Holland. From there he wandered on foot through Flanders, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, until, in 1756, he decided to go to England. He had obtained the degree of M.B., but it is not certain at which university; most probably it was at Leyden, where, unfortunately, the records were destroyed in the revolutionary wars.

In London his first post was as an assistant to an apothecary, but he soon drifted into literature. He became a hack-writer to Ralph Griffiths, proprietor of the *Monthly Review*. He worked for long hours on all kinds of subjects and was often engaged in translations.

In 1761 he met Dr. Johnson, his senior by nineteen years, and became one of the members of the Literary Club founded by the famous painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, in 1764. In the same year Goldsmith published "The Traveller," a poem relating some of his observations and experiences when wandering about the Continent.

In 1766 his novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, was written, and his great comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer," was performed in 1771. Between these two famous works he published "The Deserted Village." He had thus achieved renown, but his extravagances brought him into distress. It is truly said that there is in his character much to love but little to respect. Years of heavy overwork told upon him, for he was only forty-five when, in 1774, he died of a fever. He was buried in the Temple Church. Later, a memorial was erected in Westminster Abbey.

His friend, Dr. Johnson, said of him that "Goldsmith was a plant that flowered late," and that "he . . . was a man, who, whatever he wrote, did it better than any other man could do."

In a dedicatory letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds, Goldsmith attempted to anticipate possible objections to the realism of his account of conditions prevailing in the country, and the following extracts constitute his defence:

"How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to inquire; but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion) that the depopulation it deplures is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarcely make any other answer than that I sincerely believe what I have written: that I have taken all possible pains, in my

country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege, and that all my views and inquiries have led me to believe those miseries real which I here attempt to display. . . .

"In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries; and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty years past, it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages; and all the wisdom or antiquity in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone."

In "The Deserted Village" Goldsmith paints a somewhat idyllic picture of life in Auburn as he had known it in former years, and contrasts it with the changes which had taken place owing, as he maintained, to the increase in national trade, wealth, and consequent love of luxury. Men left the country for the towns: the country villages became neglected and decayed; and the vices of town life changed the characters of those who had migrated from the peaceful life in the villages.

The poem contains delightful descriptions of scenes from the lives of the villagers, and the character-sketches of the preacher and of the schoolmaster are sympathetic and effective. Goldsmith's comparatively free handling of the heroic couplet gives his verse grace and ease. He appears to think in paragraphs rather than in brilliantly shafted epigrams. You have, on the other hand, traces of eighteenth century personification and literary convention; thus, there is the placing of an appropriate epithet before most nouns:

No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,  
But chok'd with sedges, works its weedy way.  
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,  
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest.

The closing lines have a valedictory melancholy, for they were almost certainly the last verses he wrote. The poem originally closed with the line, "Though very poor, may still be very bless'd." Dr. Johnson wrote the last four lines to round off the poem.

CHRISTOPHER SMART (1722-1770) was born at Shipbourne in Kent. In 1739 he went to Cambridge, where he had a reputation for folly and extravagance. His contemporary, Gray, forecast that the end would be jail or bedlam. In 1753 Smart married the step-daughter of Newbery, a London bookseller, and for a time made a living by various kinds of literary work: Latin verses, epigrams,

translations, ballads, and contributions to a periodical magazine. In 1763 he was confined in a madhouse.

Dr. Johnson sympathized with him and remarked, "His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him—also falling upon his knees and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place."

Whilst in confinement Smart was denied writing materials. His poetic thoughts were indented with the end of a key upon the wainscot in his room. "A Song to David," written during a lucid interval, may have been composed in this fashion, but more likely was committed to memory and written out in a saner period.

Part of the poem was lost for a time, but we now have it as Smart wrote it. The poem has affinities with no other work in the eighteenth century. It is a little wearisome to read, partly because of its repetitions and partly because of the versification, which is that of Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*, the tale that was interrupted by the host with "No more of this!"

In spite of this there is a fire of poetic spirit which leaps up to great heights. The fierce energy of the poem with its vivid images should be contrasted with the subdued note and quietude of Dyer's "Grongar Hill." A modern critic points out how amazing it is that Smart, a poor booksellers' hack, mentally unstable, brought low by drink and poverty, should have risen to such a height of poetic performance while still in the depths of his distress.

Smart's David is the inspired singer of the Joy of Earth, the glory of all creation abandoned to the fervour of uttering its praises of the Lord. Browning was carried away by this poem, which clearly influences his "Saul." This influence is especially powerful in the stanza beginning

I have gone the whole round of creation :  
I saw and I spoke.

**WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850).** Wordsworth was not only "Nature's priest," revealing to us "the wonder and bloom of the world," but also an interpreter of human life both in the poetic and philosophic expression of his own views of life and also in his narrative poems. And just as in many of his nature-poems, he takes the so-called commonplace things and invests them with a sense of wonder and mystery and beauty, so also in many of his poems which speak of human life, he chooses the simple, unassuming people of his own dales and hills and reveals to us their hidden strength and beauty of character.

In his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth set forth the principles which had guided him in writing much of his early poetry, and the following extract from the Preface may enable

readers to understand and appreciate the two poems in this selection: "Michael" and "Resolution and Independence."

"The principal object, then, proposed in these poems,<sup>1</sup> was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of Nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets, who think they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.<sup>2</sup>

"I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which

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<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's poems in *Lyrical Ballads*.

<sup>2</sup> It is worth while here to observe, that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day.



some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions ; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable to the writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived ; but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*. If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, and though this be true, poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings ; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

"It has been said that each of these poems has a purpose. Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these poems from the popular poetry of the day ; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling."

*Michael* (1800)

*Wordsworth's note to Miss Fenwick :*

"The sheepfold on which so much of the poem turns remains, or rather the ruins of it. The character and circumstances of Luke were taken from a family to whom had belonged, many years before, the house<sup>1</sup> we lived in at Town-End, along with some fields and woodlands on the eastern shore of Grasmere. The name of the Evening Star was not in fact given to this house, but to another on the same side of the valley more to the north."

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<sup>1</sup>Dove Cottage.

*Extract from a letter from Wordsworth to the Right Hon. Charles James Fox :*

"In the two poems, 'The Brothers' and 'Michael,' I have attempted to draw a picture of domestic affections, as I know they exist among a class of men who are now almost confined to the North of England. They are small independent proprietors of land, here called statesmen, men of respectable education, who daily labour on their own little properties. The domestic affections will always be strong amongst men who live in a country not crowded with population. But if they are proprietors of small estates, which have descended to them from their ancestors, the power which these affections will acquire amongst such men, is inconceivable by those who have only had an opportunity of observing hired labourers, farmers, and the manufacturing poor. Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet upon which they are written, which makes them objects of memory in a thousand instances, when they would otherwise be forgotten. It is a fountain fitted to the nature of social man, from which supplies of affection, as pure as his heart was intended for, are daily drawn. . . . The two poems which I have mentioned were written with a view to show that men who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply. . . . The poems are faithful copies from Nature; and I hope, whatever effect they may have upon you, you will at least be able to perceive that they may excite profitable sympathies in many kind and good hearts, and may in some small degree enlarge our feelings of reverence for our species, and our knowledge of human nature, by showing that our best qualities are possessed by men whom we are too apt to consider, not with reference to the points in which they resemble us, but to those in which they manifestly differ from us."

In "Michael" Wordsworth's blank verse has such an easy flow that this, together with the intentional simplicity of language, in places reads like prose. Wordsworth is writing with such dignity, pathos, and restraint, that the poem never sinks into the merely humdrum. It should also be noticed that Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction does not always accord with his practice; for instance, line 279, "Make ready Luke's best garments" is not "the very language of men."

Wordsworth's blank verse has a freedom from monotony. There are frequent variations in metre and in pause.

#### *Resolution and Independence*

*Wordsworth's note to Miss Fenwick :*

"This old man I met a few hundred yards from my cottage at Town-End, Grasmere; and the account of him is taken from his own mouth. I was in the state of feeling described in the

beginning of the poem, while crossing over Barton Fell from Mr. Clarkson's at the foot of Ullswater, towards Askham. The image of the hare I then observed on the ridge of the Fell."

*Extract from a letter in which Wordsworth explains the significance he attaches to this poem :*

"It is not a matter of indifference whether you are pleased with his figure and employment ; it may be comparatively whether you are pleased with *this Poem* ; but it is of the utmost importance that you should have had pleasure in contemplating the fortitude, independence, persevering spirit and the general moral dignity of this old man's character.

"I will explain to you, in prose, my feelings in writing that poem . . . I describe myself as having been exalted to the highest pitch of delight by the joyousness and beauty of Nature ; and then as depressed, even in the midst of those beautiful objects, to the lowest dejection and despair. A young poet, in the midst of the happiness of Nature, is described as overwhelmed by the thoughts of the miserable reverses which have befallen the happiest of all men, viz., poets. I think of this till I am so deeply impressed with it, that I consider the manner in which I was rescued from my dejection and despair almost as an interposition of Providence. A person reading the poem with feelings like mine will have been awed and controlled, respecting something spiritual or supernatural. What is brought forward ? A lonely place, 'a pond by which an old man *was*, far from all house or home' : not *stood*, nor *sat*, but *was*—the figure presented in the most naked simplicity possible. This feeling of spirituality or supernaturalness is again referred to as being strong in my mind in this passage. How came he here ? thought I, or what can he be doing ? I then describe him, whether ill or well is not for me to judge with perfect confidence ; but this I can confidently affirm, that though I believe God has given me a strong imagination, I cannot conceive a figure more impressive than that of an old man like this, the survivor of a wife and ten children, travelling alone among the mountains and all lonely places, carrying with him his own fortitude and the necessities which an unjust state of society has laid upon him. You speak of his speech as tedious. Everything is tedious when one does not read with the feelings of the author . . . It is in the character of the old man to tell his story which an impatient reader must feel tedious. But, good heavens ! such a figure, in such a place ; a pious, self-respecting, miserably infirm and pleased old man telling such a tale !"

**SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE** (1772-1834). In "Christabel," Coleridge, by the magic genius of his poetry, casts a spell over his readers, and the supernatural becomes possible, the

unreal merges into reality. It was his aim to achieve this effect as the following extract from his *Biographia Literaria* shows :

"During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversation turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of the imagination. . . . The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural, and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life ; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

"In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads* ; in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic ; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. . . .

"With this view I wrote the 'Ancient Mariner,' and was preparing, among other poems, the 'Dark Ladie' and the 'Christabel' in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt."

"Christabel" was never finished and Coleridge wrote in explanation : "The reason of my not finishing 'Christabel' is not that I don't know how to do it—for I have, as I always had, the whole plan entire from beginning to end in my mind, but I fear I could not carry on with equal success the execution of the idea, an extremely subtle and difficult one."

In Gillman's *Life of Coleridge* we are informed that Coleridge intended to complete the poem in two more cantos and that the following was the outline of the rest of the tale :

"Over the mountains the Bard, as directed by Sir Leoline, hastens with his disciple ; but, in consequence of one of those inundations supposed to be common to the country, the spot only where the castle once stood is discovered, the edifice itself being washed away. He determines to return. Geraldine, being acquainted with all that is passing, like the weird sisters in

'Macbeth,' vanishes. Reappearing, however, she awaits the return of the Bard, exciting in the meantime by her wily arts all the anger she could rouse in the Baron's breast, as well as that jealousy of which he is described to have been susceptible. The old bard and the youth at length arrive, and therefore she can no longer personate the character of Geraldine, the daughter of Lord Roland de Vaux, but changes her appearance to that of the accepted though absent lover of Christabel. Next ensues a courtship most distressing to Christabel, who feels—she knows not why—great disgust for her once favoured knight. This coldness is very painful to the Baron, who has no more conception than herself of the supernatural transformation. She at last yields to her father's entreaties, and consents to approach the altar with the hated suitor. The real lover, returning, enters at this moment and produces the ring which she had once given him in sign of her betrothment. Thus defeated, the supernatural being Geraldine disappears. As predicted, the castle-bell tolls, the mother's voice is heard, and, to the exceeding great joy of the parties, the rightful marriage takes place, after which follows a reconciliation and explanation between father and daughter."

In his Preface to the poem Coleridge drew attention to the principles of versification employed in "Christabel."

"The metre of the 'Christabel,'" he wrote, "is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion."

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788-1824) wrote this poem in two days, 26th and 27th June, 1816. He was detained by bad weather at Ouchy, a small place close to Lausanne on the north shore of Lake Geneva, and not far from the scene of the poem.

It is pleasing to notice the simplicity of the style of this poem, a feature that is absent from some of Byron's longer poems, "Lara" and "The Corsair" for instance.

Byron was readily moved by the love of political freedom. The Countess Guiccioli brought home to him Italy's struggle for independence, and he died while actively supporting the cause of Greek independence. Part of the story of the poem is fictitious, for Byron gives us an outline of the story of the real Bonnivard.

The story may be summarized thus: Francois de Bonnivard, born 1496, and a Protestant, defended Geneva against the Duke of Savoy. The latter, with a force of five hundred men, entered

Geneva, and Bonnivard, who had encountered the Duke's displeasure by resisting, sought to retire to Fribourg in South Germany. He was betrayed and imprisoned for two years.

After his release he was captured in the Jura mountains by a party of thieves who, in 1536, handed him over to the Duke of Savoy. Without being brought to trial Bonnivard was kept a prisoner for six years in the Castle of Cullion. Eventually he was freed by the citizens of Bern, and the Genevans, for whom he had suffered so much, honoured him and chose him as one of the members of their Council. His influence was always exercised on behalf of moderation and humanity, so that he was able to induce them to grant religious toleration.

He was an intense scholar and was especially well read in history and theology. In 1551 he gave his library to Geneva, where it became the nucleus of a national library. He died probably in 1570 or 1571.

In studying this poem you should notice the prisoner's varying moods as he passes through the phases of hopeless bondage, the lingering torments of his brothers' deaths, his wild outburst on finding that he is the sole survivor, the forlorn feeling of desolation when his passion is spent, the penetration of happiness at the song of the bird, the compensatory but deadening reconciliation with his lot until he becomes almost in love with his dungeon and its chains, and until it is with some reluctance that he regains his freedom.

**JOHN KEATS** (1795-1821) was born in London and died of consumption in Rome at the early age of twenty-six. His work shows the influence of Spenser's "Faerie Queene" and of Chapman's "Homer." It is true that he saw his Greeks through Elizabethan eyes. There is a rich sumptuousness in much of his verse. He held the opinion that "poetry must surprise by a fine excess," and in "Hyperion" there is apparent not only the influence of Spenser and Chapman, but also much of the fine "poetic luxury" of Milton. This poem gave him a theme of almost equal grandeur with "Paradise Lost." Here is a mighty conflict between great powers and the beginning of a new era.

Keats has his limitations, for he has less power of dramatic situation than Milton (cf. especially "Paradise Lost," Book II), but Keats shows the beauty of his figures in sculptural repose. There is not much of active defiance and hatred in the fallen Titans; they seem to brood over their utterly lost cause, but theirs is no weak repining, for they have still much of the old classic dignity and grandeur, though at times they have richly romantic powers of utterance. There is a true artistic balance held between the theme and the musical flow of the poetry. His was the search for the happy union of truth and beauty. He wrote once

"I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the heart's affections and the Truth of Imagination."

Perhaps the finest of all tributes to "Hyperion" was that paid by Lord Byron: "'Hyperion' seems actually inspired by the Titans, and is as sublime as Æschylus."

### *Hyperion*

Hyperion was a Titan, one of the children of Uranus and Gæ. There were twelve of these older gods, namely, Oceanus, Iapetus, Cœus, Crius, Hyperion, and Chronos (or Saturn) who were the sons, and the daughters, Thea, Rhea, Themis, Mnemosyne, Phœbe, and Tethys. There is a certain discrepancy in these names in different accounts of the legends.

Uranus, the first ruler of the universe, was the parent of some strange monsters, the Hecantoncheires (Hundred-handed)—Briareus, Cottys, and Gyes; and the Cyclopes—Arges, Steropes, and Brontes. Incensed with them, he cast them into Tartarus. Their mother sided with her children and led the Titans to make war on their father. Uranus was defeated and dethroned. The Titans released their brothers and made Saturn the new ruler. One of his first acts was to cast the Cyclopes back into Tartarus and to marry his sister Rhea. It was prophesied that one of his sons would supplant him, so that he ate his children as soon as they were born. Rhea managed to save Zeus (Jupiter).

When Jupiter grew up he was helped by Thetis, who concocted a drink which made Saturn vomit up all the children he had swallowed. They now rebelled against their father and the Titans. Gæ (Earth) promised Jupiter victory provided that he released the Cyclopes from Tartarus. He did this and was rewarded by their giving him thunderbolts and lightning. The Titans were beaten and imprisoned in the depths below Tartarus, where the Hecantoncheires still guard them.

### *The Eve of St. Agnes*

Keats began this poem in January 1819. It reveals him as turning away from the influence of Milton which so marks "Hyperion," and, in this new and charming poem of youth, turning to those poets whose power he had felt when quite young, Spenser and Chatterton.

In "The Eve of St. Agnes" there is all the warmth and glow of youth. The old Beadsman feels the cold, but the lovers are caught up in the warmth of rapturous romance. It is here that Keats comes close to some of the inspired moods of Browning.

There are no shadowy abstractions in this poem. Spenser's languorous melody and shadowy figures are absent and in their stead there is an atmosphere of tension felt by these impetuous lovers. The whole poem glows with a rich sensuousness of description.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)  
*The Lotus-Eaters*

Tennyson had two great advantages over Keats, for he underwent a period of deliberate self-training for authorship and longer life was given him in which to develop his powers. He was able to study the Greek classics at first hand instead of seeing them through Elizabethan eyes, so that there is less profusion and more of the quieter Greek spirit in his work. Tennyson, however, follows Keats in the rich detail of scenic description.

The Lotus-Eaters were epicures who are made impotent by their seeking happiness in luxurious repose, regarding it as their only end in life. The magnificent choric song seems to proceed from some divine inspiration rather than from men resigned to ignoble ease.

Tennyson made a number of modifications and improvements after the poem was published in 1842. A. W. Kinglake was particularly severe in his review of the poem as it appeared originally.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889) is represented in this anthology by two poems of his vigorous maturity. He was a man of great mental energy, capable at times of rising to sublime heights of inspiration. Sir Henry Jones once compared him to "a great lighthouse bursting with light." The development of man's mental and spiritual life was always a subject that interested him. Here there is a suddenness of change from the complicated, interwoven harmonies to the miracle:

And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,  
 That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but  
 a star.

The power that lies dormant in the musician is miraculously set free and soars with a "careless rapture."

Browning was a man of keen sympathies. There is a fierce, robust energy about his work which enables him to appreciate the spirit of Abt Vogler's ecstatic moment and that which prompts the plodding grammarian to lay the foundations of a further advance into knowledge. With both these men there is a steadfastness of purpose and there is always a prospect of their soaring to great heights. With both, there is a feeling of immortality:

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;  
 Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor  
 power

Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the  
 melodist

When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.



*A Grammarian's Funeral*

In this requiem the note sounded is one of victory. It is not fame which spurs him on "to shun delights and live laborious days," but the feeling that he can trust death, for, far from being the mere plodder or accumulator of dull facts, he is really among the sublime ones of the world; he is cast in the mould of Apollo; his place is not, as some would think, in the dust of books, but

where meteors shoot, clouds form,  
Lightnings are loosened.

The meticulous care he gives to details of grammar, giving us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*, for instance, is one manifestation of his soaring imagination.

Lofty designs must close in like effects :  
Loftily lying.

So that there is a link between the lowest and most despised of drudgery and the feeling of divinity in man.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888) was the eldest son of Dr. Arnold, headmaster of Rugby. After being a student at his father's school Matthew Arnold won a Balliol scholarship to Oxford in 1841 and, although he subsequently became a Fellow of Oriel College, he did not stay long at Oxford. He became secretary to Lord Lansdowne, who later procured for him the post of inspector of schools. Arnold's best work was written while he was busy in this new appointment.

After two volumes of his poetry had been coldly received by the public, Arnold published in 1853, along with some of his best previous work, "*Sohrab and Rustum*" and "*The Scholar Gipsy*." The most potent of the influences on his poetry were the spirit of the ancient Greeks and that of Goethe. There is a melancholy tinge about the restraint in Arnold's work, for he avoids both pomp and passion, and his treatment of Nature shows her as beautiful, but somewhat cold and detached from the affairs of men.

*Arnold's Preface*

What are the eternal objects of Poetry, among all nations and at all times? They are actions; human actions; possessing an inherent issue in themselves and which are to be communicated in an interesting manner by the art of the poet. . . .

The poet, then, has in the first place to select an excellent action; and what actions are the most excellent? Those, certainly, which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections: to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race and which are independent of time. These feelings are

permanent and the same ; that which interests them is permanent and also the same. The modernness or antiquity of an action, therefore, has nothing to do with its fitness for poetical representation ; this depends upon its inherent qualities. To the elementary part of our natures, to our passions, that which is great and passionate is eternally interesting ; and interesting solely in proportion to its greatness and to its passion. A great human action of a thousand years ago is more interesting to it than a smaller human action of to-day, even though upon the representation of this last the most consummate skill may have been expended, and though it has the advantage of appealing by its modern language, familiar manners, and contemporary allusions, to all our transient feelings and interests.

What distinguishes the artist from the mere amateur, says Goethe, is *Architectonicé* in the higher sense ; that power of execution which creates, forms, and constitutes ; not the profoundness of single thoughts, not the *richness of imagery*, not the *abundance of illustration*. The individual writer may certainly learn of the ancients, better than anywhere else, three things which it is vitally important for him to know ; the all-importance of the choice of a subject, the necessity of accurate construction, and the subordinate character of expression. He will learn from them how unspeakably superior is the effect of the one moral impression left by a great action treated as a whole, to the effect produced by the most striking single thought or by the happiest image. As he penetrates into the spirit of the great classical works, as he becomes gradually aware of their intense significance, their noble simplicity and their calm pathos, he will be convinced that it is this effect, unity and profoundness of moral impression, at which the ancient poets aimed ; that it is this which constitutes the grandeur of their works, and which makes them immortal. He will desire to direct his own efforts towards producing the same effect.

In a letter to his friend, the poet Arthur Hugh Clough, Arnold says of "Sohrab and Rustum" : "I think the poem has, if not the rapidity, at least the fluidity, of Homer."

### *The Scholar Gipsy*

This poem, which also appeared in the 1853 edition of Arnold's poems, is based on a story taken from Glanvil's *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661.

Glanvil tells of a promising lad, who, through poverty, was obliged to leave the University of Oxford. He fell in with some gipsies and learned much of their lore and their way of living. He was especially impressed by the fact that they "could do wonders by the power of imagination." It was his intention to

*A Grammarian's Funeral*

In this requiem the note sounded is one of victory. It is not fame which spurs him on "to shun delights and live laborious days," but the feeling that he can trust death, for, far from being the mere plodder or accumulator of dull facts, he is really among the sublime ones of the world; he is cast in the mould of Apollo; his place is not, as some would think, in the dust of books, but

where meteors shoot, clouds form,  
Lightnings are loosened.

The meticulous care he gives to details of grammar, giving us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*, for instance, is one manifestation of his soaring imagination.

Lofty designs must close in like effects :  
Loftily lying.

So that there is a link between the lowest and most despised of drudgery and the feeling of divinity in man.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888) was the eldest son of Dr. Arnold, headmaster of Rugby. After being a student at his father's school Matthew Arnold won a Balliol scholarship to Oxford in 1841 and, although he subsequently became a Fellow of Oriel College, he did not stay long at Oxford. He became secretary to Lord Lansdowne, who later procured for him the post of inspector of schools. Arnold's best work was written while he was busy in this new appointment.

After two volumes of his poetry had been coldly received by the public, Arnold published in 1853, along with some of his best previous work, "Sohrab and Rustum" and "The Scholar Gipsy." The most potent of the influences on his poetry were the spirit of the ancient Greeks and that of Goethe. There is a melancholy tinge about the restraint in Arnold's work, for he avoids both pomp and passion, and his treatment of Nature shows her as beautiful, but somewhat cold and detached from the affairs of men.

*Arnold's Preface*

What are the eternal objects of Poetry, among all nations and at all times? They are actions; human actions; possessing an inherent issue in themselves and which are to be communicated in an interesting manner by the art of the poet. . . .

The poet, then, has in the first place to select an excellent action; and what actions are the most excellent? Those, certainly, which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections: to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race and which are independent of time. These feelings are

permanent and the same ; that which interests them is permanent and also the same. The modernness or antiquity of an action, therefore, has nothing to do with its fitness for poetical representation ; this depends upon its inherent qualities. To the elementary part of our natures, to our passions, that which is great and passionate is eternally interesting ; and interesting solely in proportion to its greatness and to its passion. A great human action of a thousand years ago is more interesting to it than a smaller human action of to-day, even though upon the representation of this last the most consummate skill may have been expended, and though it has the advantage of appealing by its modern language, familiar manners, and contemporary allusions, to all our transient feelings and interests.

What distinguishes the artist from the mere amateur, says Goethe, is *Architectonicé* in the higher sense ; that power of execution which creates, forms, and constitutes ; not the profoundness of single thoughts, not the *richness of imagery*, *not the abundance of illustration*. The individual writer may certainly learn of the ancients, better than anywhere else, three things which it is vitally important for him to know ; the all-importance of the choice of a subject, the necessity of accurate construction, and the subordinate character of expression. He will learn from them how unspeakably superior is the effect of the one moral impression left by a great action treated as a whole, to the effect produced by the most striking single thought or by the happiest image. As he penetrates into the spirit of the great classical works, as he becomes gradually aware of their intense significance, their noble simplicity and their calm pathos, he will be convinced that it is this effect, unity and profoundness of moral impression, at which the ancient poets aimed ; that it is this which constitutes the grandeur of their works, and which makes them immortal. He will desire to direct his own efforts towards producing the same effect.

In a letter to his friend, the poet Arthur Hugh Clough, Arnold says of "Sohrab and Rustum" : "I think the poem has, if not the rapidity, at least the fluidity, of Homer."

#### *The Scholar Gipsy*

This poem, which also appeared in the 1853 edition of Arnold's poems, is based on a story taken from Glanvil's *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661.

Glanvil tells of a promising lad, who, through poverty, was obliged to leave the University of Oxford. He fell in with some gipsies and learned much of their lore and their way of living. He was especially impressed by the fact that they "could do wonders by the power of imagination." It was his intention to

give the world a full account of their traditions and their secrets"

Matthew Arnold makes his scholar gipsy have the same inquiring spirit, but gives to him the higher aim of searching for truth in its final and most permanent form.

"The Scholar Gipsy" is considered by many to be the most charming of Arnold's poems, for he shows how much he loves familiar scenes in and around Oxford. Like "Thyrsis" this poem is a pastoral elegy, but Arnold avoids most of the artificiality of the pastoral convention, and his epithets are not typical of the school of Pope, Gay, or Shenstone.

The comparatively rare ten-line stanza is used. The iambus is the predominant foot. There are but three feet in the sixth line, which has the effect of dividing the stanza into a sestet and a concluding quatrain. You will notice that, like Gray, Arnold has a tendency to moralize in an elegiac poem, and that many of these moral reflections appear in the concluding quatrains.

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896) was born at Walthamstow and as a young man delighted in walking in Epping Forest. He went to Oxford, where he took his degree in 1855 and where he had already begun to write narrative verse.

He met in London Dante Gabriel Rossetti, brother of Christina. Morris already excelled in different forms of art which he had taught himself, for he sought to recapture something of the spirit of medieval craftsmanship and to teach his fellow men the joys of making beautiful things with their hands. Rossetti persuaded Morris to paint, and in this, too, Morris began to achieve success. He later taught himself to carve in wood and stone, to design furniture, to plan gardens, to dye—he once made a good yellow dye by boiling poplar twigs—to make tapestry, and to print.

As a Socialist, he came into friendly contact with Mr. John Burns, Mr. Sidney Webb, and Mr. Bernard Shaw.

In his poetry Morris has the power of presenting the scene as if it were taking place before his eyes. This is because there is something of a child's spirit of delight in the simplicity and clearness of his narrative. He prefers narration to dramatic introspection. It is events rather than characters that are outstanding in his poems. He greatly admired Chaucer's simplicity of narration, and almost the last thing he did before his death was to issue an edition of Chaucer from his press at Merton, Surrey.

The stories in *The Earthly Paradise* are linked in a manner suggestive of Chaucer, for there is a prologue which serves as a connecting link through the tales. "Atalanta's Race" is the first of twenty-four tales related in *The Earthly Paradise*. From the Argument to the Prologue we learn that "certain gentlemen and mariners of Norway, having considered all that they had heard of the Earthly Paradise, set sail to find it, and after many troubles

and the lapse of many years came old men to some western land of which they had never before heard : there they died, when they had dwelt there certain years, much honoured of the strange people."

The elders of the town their comrades were,  
And they to them were waxen now as dear  
As ancient men to ancient men can be ;  
Grave matters of belief and polity  
They spoke of oft, but not alone of these ;  
For in their times of idleness and ease  
They told of poets' vain imaginings  
And memories of half-forgotten things  
Not true nor false, but sweet to think upon.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830-1894) was born in London. Her father was Professor of Italian at King's College, London. Through her brother, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, she came into contact with William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones the painter. With them she shared a desire to lead art back to the principles on which it had flourished before the Renaissance ; in other words, she, like Morris, did not regard art as a superfluity, but as something essential to everyone's happiness. The Industrial Revolution had left a grim legacy of joyless labour. There was dullness everywhere. Joy in art was to be the way of escape.

In reading "Goblin Market" you are at once charmed by its inconsequential tone ; the story is told just as a story should be, without asides, explanations, or moralizings. There are repetitions, a familiar delight in all fairy stories ; the sudden impulse which brings a tragic climax ; pleasing little pictures of quietude ; swift, helter-skelter ; the slow dying of the fire that spread through Laura's veins ; and the disarming simplicity of the closing lines :

For there is no friend like a sister  
In calm or stormy weather ;  
To cheer one on the tedious way,  
To fetch one if one goes astray,  
To lift one if one totters down,  
To strengthen whilst one stands.

### *Goblin Market*

Goblins are considered to have been the gods of the older races of mankind, but, as was often the case, they were superseded by newer deities and, since their existence had once been admitted and therefore could not be ignored, they were regarded as evil spirits. They are always ugly and mischievous, except for those who labour for mankind by doing household tasks during the night.

You should contrast the goblins in this poem with those you read of in German legends and again with those described by George MacDonald. In her sketches of her goblins Christina Rossetti drew them with animals' heads, but with human bodies and almost human hands and feet.

FRANCIS THOMPSON (1859-1907) was born at Preston in Lancashire. As a boy he was shy and retiring and seems to have been unhappy at school. It was at first intended that he should follow his father's profession, so that he studied medicine at Owens College, Manchester. It is said that he preferred to read poetry in the public library than to study chemistry or physiology. He thus failed to make progress in medicine and gave himself up to literature.

He had a severe illness and, after a partial recovery, came to London clad in rags. One of his few possessions was a book of Blake's poems, his chief consolation, for he had to make a wretched living cleaning boots or selling newspapers and matches. He often slept on the Embankment.

He was a Roman Catholic and lover of mysticism. He found friends who held the same religious beliefs and who helped to publish his poems. It was his meeting with Mr. Wilfrid Meynell in 1887 that proved a turning-point in Thompson's life. Mr. Meynell was the editor of *Merrie England*, a magazine; he noted the quality of some of Thompson's work and, expressing a desire to meet him, was amazed to see him so poorly clad.

Wilfrid Meynell and his wife, Alice, herself a poet, took Thompson to their home, where he remained for the rest of his life. Through their kind help he published *Poems* (1893), *Sister Songs* (1895), and *New Poems* (1897).

In Thompson's work is a rare, mystic quality. It is not easy to criticize "The Hound of Heaven." Its inspiration is unmistakable: its occasional use of strange or invented words enhances its mystic effects. It is impossible here to say much about the literary traditions of the theme of this poem, except to draw attention to its elaborate and dramatic treatment of St. Augustine's theme, "Thou wast driving me on with Thy good, so that I could not be at rest until Thou wast manifest to the eye of my soul." There are some striking resemblances in matter and in form between "The Hound of Heaven" and Crashaw's poem "Counsel." (See *The English Poems of Richard Crashaw* (c. 1613-1649), vol. ii, pp. 103-5, ed. J. R. Tutin, or p. 146 in *The Muses' Library* edition.)

The standard life of Francis Thompson is in three volumes by Everard Meynell. In 1936 Francis Owlett published a stimulating essay on Francis Thompson. He speaks of the richly embroidered style and of how Thompson's rhetoric has in it much of the sublimity of the Hebrew seers. Here we see the Divine pursuing

through distances that transcend distance. "The challenge of the Voice, the sound of those following feet echo and re-echo through the poem." Owlett shows how Thompson triumphed over "the meagreness of words" and defends him against the charge of obscurity by pointing out that there are no far-fetched literary conceits as we so often find in the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. From its nature a mystical poem must appear obscure in places; it should therefore be approached with awe and reverence, for in this receptive mood the inner meaning of the poem will grow into the reader's mind.

THOMAS STURGE MOORE (1870), as was William Morris, is gifted with his hands. His best work, apart from his poems and his prose writings, consists chiefly in his wood-engravings and his designs for book-plates and book-covers. Recognition of his work led, in 1920, to his being awarded a pension from the Civil List. Among his chief literary works are *Dürer* (1904), *Poems* (1906), *Art and Life* (1910), *Judas* (1923), and *Collected Poems* (1932-34). You should certainly read his *Dying Swan*.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER was born in 1884 and died at Davos in Switzerland in 1915. He was intended for the Consular Service and for a time lived in Constantinople and Smyrna. His best known work is *Hassan*, which some years ago was performed at His Majesty's Theatre, London.

Oriental gateways seem to have had a fascination for Flecker, for the finest lines of *Hassan* show a caravan waiting inside Bagdad, "gnawing the nail of hurry" to be off on "the golden road to Samarkand."

In Flecker's poetry there is much of the strangeness and richness of the East. He creates an atmosphere of wonder all the more attractive because of its vagueness.

RUPERT BROOKE (1887-1915) was born at Rugby and became a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, just before the Great War.

In September 1914 he took a commission as a sub-lieutenant in the R.N.V.R. and within a few weeks was sent to Antwerp in a praiseworthy but futile attempt to resist its capture by the Germans. At the end of the following February he went with the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. In less than two months, on St. George's Day, 1915, he died at Skyros in the Ægean Sea. His well-known 1914 *and Other Poems* was published about a month after his death. The significance of his work was immediately noticed, for a number of impressions were quickly sold.

For a time after taking his degree Rupert Brooke lived at the Old Vicarage, a long, ramshackle, one-storied house, in Grant-



chester. He also travelled widely and, as you will have noticed, wrote this poem when he was staying in Berlin. He contrasts the continental heat with the coolness of the green, sheltered English village amid its pleasant waters. But even more he contrasts the waywardness and rich profusion of the English countryside with German orderliness: with a touch of sly humour he praises

"An English unofficial rose";<sup>1</sup>

He thinks, too, of the literary associations of Cambridgeshire, of Chaucer's miller, of Lord Byron, and of Lord Tennyson and the brook.

Like Pope, Rupert Brooke has a number of memorable lines in which one feels that the idea was "ne'er so well expressed." In "The Great Lover" there is "the cool kindliness of sheets" and "the rough male kiss of the blankets": here, it is "a vague, unpunctual star," "on lissom, clerical, printless toe"; "the yet unacademic stream," or

A bosky wood, a slumbrous stream,

And little kindly winds that creep

Round twilight corners, half asleep.

The appeal of the unconventional epithet is instantaneous and irresistible.

Towards the end of the poem there peep out those well-known features of the English rustic, his independence and his suspicion of "foreigners," namely people from some other village. These countryside beliefs are related with a mocking seriousness and with just the right note of vague generalization: other places have their drawbacks, but Grantchester has no flaws.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON (1878) attracts by the simplicity and directness of his verse. It is, perhaps, presumptuous to make critical estimates of the value of the work of poets still living. Quite often their next volume of verse refutes the critic's earlier judgments and prophecies. Mr. Gibson has a close sympathy for the English countryfolk. Some of his shorter poems have already appeared in this series: "The Plough" and "The Ice-Car" in *Ballads and Narrative Poems*; "Michael's Song" in *The Poets' Path*; "Flannan Isle," "The Parrots," and "Hands," in *The Poets' Way*. He has the power of instantly awakening and sustaining the reader's sympathy in his central characters. Also he takes a sympathetic delight in bird-lore.

Some of his chief works are: *Stonefolds* (1907), *Daily Bread* (1910), *Battle* (1916), *Livelihood* (1917), *Within* (1918), *Neighbours* (1920), *Kestrel Edge and Other Plays* (1924), and *I Heard a Sailor* (1925).

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<sup>1</sup> The Vicarage had a "most individual and bewildering garden."





